Guitar & Bass MARCH 2014

ALBERT LEE INTERVIEW!

Guitar & Bass

ONE Vision

Our continuing love affair with single pickup electrics

Fret-King and Martin guitar reviews

Return To The Holy Grail

The Gibson Les Paul 1959 Tom Murphy

PLUS!

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Workshops
and more...

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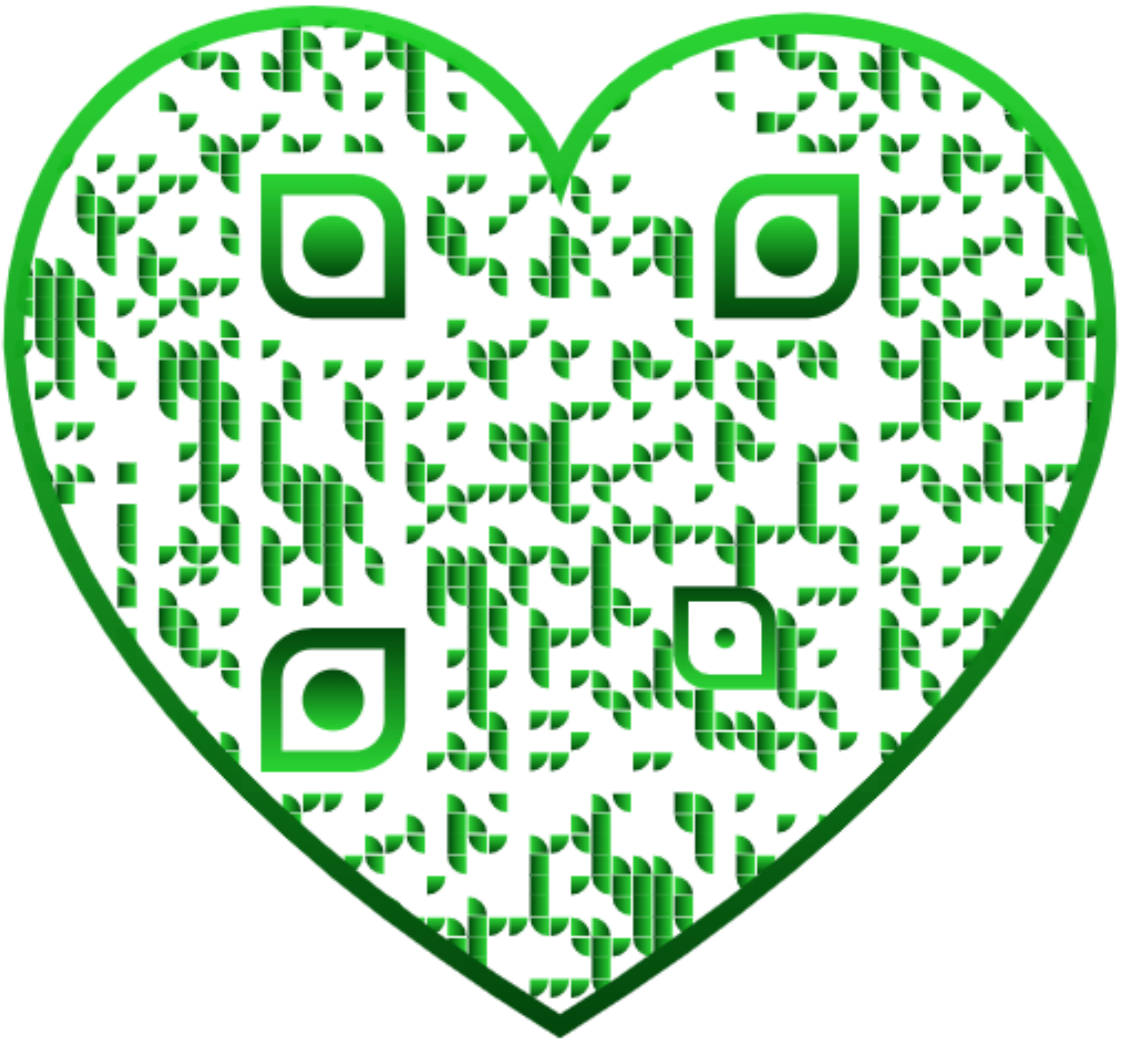

CADILLAC IN MODEL "A" THE WORLD IS YOURS THAT'LL BE THE DAY PEGGY SUE
BABY BLUE LA BAMBA APACHE
LET'S GO TRIPPIN' TRICK BAG
WALK, DON'T RUN MISIRLOU
I FOUGHT THE LAW SURFIN' U.S.A.
HELP ME RHONDA NOWHERE MAN
PURPLE HAZE FIRE
ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE
KICK OUT THE JAMS F.B.I.
ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER
THE NIGHT THEY DROVE OLD DIXIE DOWN
BELL BOTTOM BLUES PROUD MARY
WHAT IS LIFE LAYLA
SMOKE ON THE WATER
REELIN' IN THE YEARS
SUPERFLY THAT LADY
YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHIN' YET
SWEET HOME ALABAMA MONEY
TOO ROLLING STONED
DIXIE CHICKEN MAGIC MAN
CARRY ON MY WAYWARD SON
WALK THIS WAY FREEWAY JAM
BEAST OF BURDEN BAD PENNY
FLY LIKE AN EAGLE
SULTANS OF SWING
WONDERFUL TONIGHT LE FREAK
MY SHARONA LIMELIGHT
COMFORTABLY NUMB
RUN TO THE HILLS MANEATER
ELEPHANT TALK LENNY
PRIDE (IN THE NAME OF LOVE)
OWNER OF A LONELY HEART
CUTS LIKE A KNIFE
ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER BIG LOG
YOU GIVE LOVE A BAD NAME
BLACK STAR
PRIDE AND JOY
SHAKESPEARE'S SISTER
FINISH WHAT YA STARTED
SLOW TURNING
SEE A LITTLE LIGHT
SMOKING GUN TUFF ENUFF
SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT
CLIFFS OF DOVER
ENDLESS, NAMELESS
DAMN RIGHT I'VE GOT THE BLUES
WICKED GAME COMEDOWN
BLUE ON BLACK
SWALLOWED
SCAR TISSUE
ALIVE NO RAIN
BULLET WITH BUTTERFLY WINGS
SHOW ME HOW TO LIVE
DAMMIT LAST NITE
MAPS GRAVITY
DIVINIATIONS ABEL
I BET YOU LOOK GOOD ON THE DANCEFLOOR
'TIL SUMMER COMES AROUND
FORGET YOU
BEVERLY HILLS
WHO WOULDN'T FALL IN LOVE WITH YOU
GET LUCKY BLACK CHANDELIER

STRATOCASTER 60 YEARS 1954 2014

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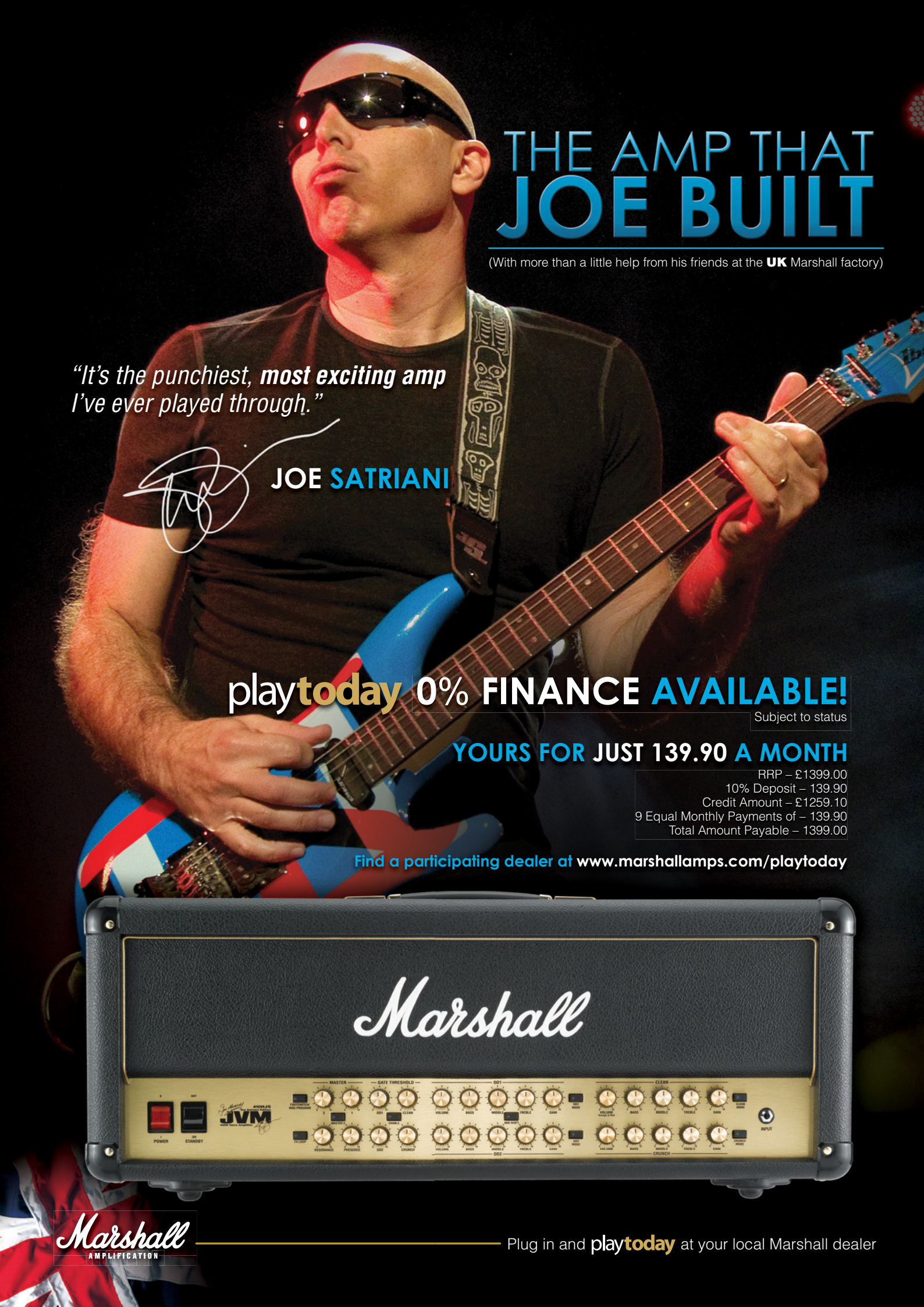
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Electric Guitars

8030 - 1963 Gibson ES175 Jazz Guitar, Sunburst
10067 - Brian May Bass in Cherry with Gig Bag
10066 - Brian May Red Special, Antique Cherry
10055 - Brian May Red Special, Metal May
7028 - Brian May Red Special, Antique Cherry
10065 - Brian May Red Special, Baby Blue
10061 - Brian May Red Special, Black
10063 - Brian May Red Special, Gold
10064 - Brian May Red Special, Green
10059 - Brian May Red Special, Honey Sunburst
10058 - Brian May Red Special, Natural
10057 - Brian May Red Special, Sunburst
10062 - Brian May Red Special, White
10060 - Brian May Red Special, Windermere Blue
10069 - Brian May Rhapsody Electro, Black
10068 - Brian May Rhapsody Electro, Cherry
10071 - Brian May Rhapsody Electro, Red
10070 - Brian May Rhapsody Electro, Sunburst
10231 - Brooks Custom Steve, Lukather Clone
9767 - Cort G260 Electric Guitar
10224 - Cort M600 AVD Antique Violin Dark
10220 - Cort Sunset I in Black
10223 - Cort X6 S-M BK Electric Guitar in Black
7793 - DBZ Barchetta Eminent FR Absinthe
7785 - DBZ Barchetta ST, Aubergine
7789 - DBZ Barchetta ST FR, Cobalt Blue
7814 - DBZ Crucifixion Electric Guitar
7810 - DBZ Dark Angel Electric Guitar
7812 - DBZ Bare Bones Religion Series Devil
7811 - DBZ Bare Bones Religion Series Preacher
7800 - DBZ Bolero AB, Solid Wine Red
7796 - DBZ Bolero FM, Trans Wine
7794 - DBZ Bolero ST, Black
7837 - DBZ Venom, Dark Blue Metallic
9770 - Dean Evo, Pre-Owned
5043 - Duesenberg 49er Cow Limited Edition
5040 - Duesenberg Rocket II in Black & White
10233 - ESP LTD MH50, Black, Pre-Owned
9769 - Encore Electric Guitar, Black
5205 - Epiphone Broadway Jazz Semi, Natural
8220 - Epiphone ES339 Semi Hollowbody, Ebony
9155 - Epiphone ES339, Natural
8528 - Epiphone ES339 Ultra, Vintage Sunburst
5432 - Epiphone G310 SG Shape, White
9631 - Epiphone Joe Pass Emperor II, Natural
9695 - Epiphone Les Paul Special II Cherryburst
9905 - Epiphone LP Stan Plustop Pro, Cherry S/B
10351 - Epiphone LP Stand. Plustop Pro, Wine Red
8365 - Epiphone Les Paul Standard in Gold
10352 - Epiphone Les Paul Standard, Ebony
10217 - Epiphone Les Paul Studio, Sunburst, S/H
9604 - Epiphone Les Paul Ultra III Alpine White
8096 - Epiphone Ltd Ed Flying V, Antique White
8165 - Epiphone Ltd Ed 1961 SG, Alpine White
9666 - Epiphone Phrophecy LP Custom Plus GX
8101 - Epiphone by Gibson, Pre-Owned
4231 - Fender Am Special Strat, Candy Apple Red
9074 - Fender American Special Strat, Sunburst
9914 - Fender Am. Special Tele, Vintage Blonde
9348 - Fender American Stan. Hand Stained Strat
10199 - Fender Am Stand. Strat LH, Sburst
9910 - Fender Am Standard Strat, Mystic Blue
8342 - Fender Am Standard Strat, Sienna Sburst
9134 - Fender American Stratocaster Daphne Blue
9023 - Fender American Vintage '70s Strat Reissue, Nat
9287 - Fender Blacktop Stratocaster HH, Black
10072 - Fender Classic Player Baja Telecaster, Blonde
9261 - Fender C. Player Jaguar Spec HH, White
9559 - Fender Custom Shop 1960 Relic Strat, GR
7112 - Fender Deluxe Lonestar Strat, Sunburst
10163 - Fender FSR 72 Telecaster Deluxe, Aqua Flake
10198 - Fender FSR Am Stan. Strat, LH, Sunburst
9085 - Fender FSR Strat HSS TBX Amber Burst
10218 - Fender Japanese Strat, CAR, Pre-Owned
4634 - Fender Jim Root Signature Strat, Black
9775 - Fender Johnny Marr Jaguar, Metallic KO
10164 - Fender Kurt Cobain Mustang, Sonic Blue
8113 - Fender Modern Player Available To Order
9945 - Fender Modern Player Strat HSS, O. White
8224 - Fender Modern Player Telecaster, Honey Burst
8286 - Fender Modern Player Tele Thinline Delux
7784 - Fender Mustang Pawn Shop Special, Red
9089 - Fender Pawn Shop 51 Stratocaster, Black
9090 - Fender Pawn Shop 51 Stratocaster, Blonde
10149 - Fender Pink Paisley Telecaster, Used
5287 - Fender Road Worn 50s Strat in Black
8290 - Fender Road Worn 60's Strat, Sunburst
4229 - Fender Road Worn Player Strat, Sunburst
4232 - Fender Road Worn Player Tele, Black
9449 - Fender Select Tele USA Violin Burst
10101 - Fender Standard Strat, CAR, Secondhand
7954 - Fender Standard Strat, Copper Met Burst
4560 - Fender Standard Telecaster, Black
4748 - Fender Standard Tele, Brown Sunburst
10090 - Fender Telebration Mahogany Tele, Sburst
9911 - Fender USA 75 Telebration, Natural
9507 - Fender USA Hardtail Stratocaster 1977
8285 - Fret King Jerry Donahue, Natural
9137 - G&L ASAT Classic Bluesboy Semi, Natural
9140 - G&L ASAT Classic in Walnut
9136 - G&L Legacy in Black
9135 - G&L S500 in Blueburst
9150 - Gibson ES137 Custom, Triburst
8029 - Gibson ES175 1956 Original
9277 - Gibson ES330 VOS, Vintage Sunburst
10146 - Gibson ES335 Dot Plain Gloss, Sunburst

Electric Guitars

10273 - Gibson ES339 Antique Sunburst
9840 - Gibson Lee Roy Parnell Goldtop
8376 - Gibson Les Paul Classic 60s Trans Ebony
5317 - Gibson Les Paul Custom in Alpine White
7919 - Gibson Les Paul Custom in Wine Red
10197 - Gibson Les Paul Signature T, Trans Ebony
9444 - Gibson Les Paul Standard 2012 Goldtop
10116 - Gibson Les Paul Std 2013 Prem. Tea Burst
10117 - Gibson Les Paul Std 2013 Premi. Trans Amber
10144 - Gibson LP St Premium Plus, Desert Burst
10322 - Gibson Les Paul Stand., Heritage Cherry
9341 - Gibson Les Paul Studio, Radiant Red
5090 - Gibson Les Paul Studio Lefty, Wine Red
9557 - Gibson Les Paul Studio, Vintage Sunburst
10281 - Gibson Les Paul Trad., Caramel Burst
8202 - Gibson Nighthawk. Pelham Blue
5594 - Gibson SG Special Electric Guitar in White
10350 - Gibson SG Special Faded Cherry
10268 - Gretsch G5422TDCG Hollow Body ,White
9771 - Ibanez S470DXQM
9764 - Italia Electric Guitar, Pre-Owned
9161 - Jackson RR5 Japanese Ivory Pinstripe
4992 - Jackson JS30 Randy Rhoads, Black
4150 - Jackson SL3MG Soloist, Natural
9669 - Jackson Super Light Soloist SLSXMG GMG
0000 - Levin - 7 models in stock now
8051 - Lodestone Electric Artist, Trans Black
8052 - Lodestone Electric Artist in Sunburst
8048 - Lodestone Electric Artist, Trans Honey
8049 - Lodestone Electric Artist, Trans Red
8059 - Lodestone Electric Pro S, Chignal Blue
8065 - Lodestone Electric Pro S, Rodings White
8058 - Lodestone Electric Pro S, Tobacco Sburst
8066 - Lodestone Electric Pro S in Waltham Black
8055 - Lodestone Electric Pro, Chignal Blue
8056 - Lodestone Electric Pro, Rodings White
8053 - Lodestone Electric Pro, Roxwell Red
8057 - Lodestone Electric Pro, St James Silver
8054 - Lodestone Electric Pro, Tobacco Sunburst
8072 - Lodestone Electric Standard S, T. Sburst
8070 - Lodestone Electric Standard Trans Black
8071 - Lodestone Electric Standard S, White
8069 - Lodestone Electric Standard in White
8085 - Lodestone Pulse in Burr Maple Honeyburst
8086 - Lodestone Pulse, Matt Black
8084 - Lodestone Pulse in Metallic Gold
8087 - Lodestone Pulse, Tobacco Sunburst
7091 - MusicMan Luke HSS, Pearl Blue
4720 - MusicMan Silhouette Special, Candy Red
0000 - PRS - 12 Models in stock now
6123 - Patrick Eggle Double Cutaway in Blue
6121 - Patrick Eggle RSG Electric Guitar, Amber
9478 - Peavey AT200 Antares AutoTune Guitar
9450 - Peavey EVH Wolfgang USA-Made Goldtop
9001 - Peavey Rockmaster Captain America
9300 - Peerless Martin Taylor Virtuoso
4268 - Rickenbacker 330 12 String Semi, Jetglo
6951 - Rickenbacker 360 Semi, Fireglo
6952 - Rickenbacker 360 Semi, Jetglo
4270 - Rickenbacker 360 Semi, Mapleglo
10165 - Road Worn Player Tele, Candy Apple Red
8992 - Roland G5 Strat COSM Technology Black
8993 - Roland G5 Strat COSM Technology Sunburst
9857 - Roland G5A Strat Candy Apple Red
8990 - Roland GC1 Black GK-Ready Stratocaster
8991 - Roland GC1 Sunburst GK-Ready Strat
0000 - Squier - 6 models in stock now
0000 - Stagg - 3 models in stock now
9273 - Steinberger Spirit GT Pro
10131 - Traveller Speedster, Blue, Pre-Owned
9079 - Ventures VM100SB Bob Bogle Sig, Sunburst
9078 - Ventures VM65MBL Electric Guitar, Blue
4256 - Vintage AV2, Sunburst
9420 - Vox Apache I
9652 - Warwick Electric Guitar Accessory Pack
6982 - Washburn USADD70MayaDanDonegan,Grey
4757 - Washburn N1 Vintage Nuno Bettencourt Nat
7074 - Washburn SI61 Obey Scott Ian Sig, Black
6991 - Washburn USA Custom WI556, Metallic Red
6997 - Washburn V200 ProE in Black
7005 - Washburn WI100, Gunmetal Grey
7002 - Washburn WI100, Red
7009 - Washburn WI15 Idol Standard ,Black
8412 - Washburn WI18 Idol Quilted Trans Black
8411 - Washburn WI18 Idol Quilted Trans Red
7356 - Washburn WI420KB Idol, Black
8409 - Washburn WI-440F Idol Elect Flame Honey
8408 - Washburn WI-440F Idol Tobacco Sunburst
8406 - Washburn WI-460E Idol Electric, Black
8405 - Washburn WI-460E Idol Electric in White
6988 - Washburn WI50 in Black
6989 - Washburn WI50 Pro-E, Black
8404 - Washburn WI-63 SF Donegan Sig, Black
6995 - Washburn WV40VASIK Scott Ian Blood Splat
6996 - Washburn WV66ANC, Nick Catanese, Black
6898 - Washburn WI14 Idol in Metallic Blue
6899 - Washburn WI14 Idol in Wine Red
8230 - Washburn X10 Bass Guitar, Black
6895 - Washburn X100 in Metallic Grey
6900 - Washburn X200 Pro in Trans Black
6425 - Westcoast ST Junior in Black & Sunburst
6449 - Westcoast ST1 in Ivory, Red & Natural
8416 - Yamaha Pacifica 012 in Red Metallic
8414 - Yamaha Pacifica 012, Dark Blue Metallic
10234 - Yamaha Pacifica 012 in Black
8121 - Yamaha Pacifica 311H, Vintage White
8184 - Yamaha Pacifica 510V , Candy Apple Red
10319 - Yamaha Pacifica 611 VHFM
8124 - Yamaha Pacifica 611 Root Beer

Acoustic & Electro Acoustics

8033 - Breedlove AD25/SM
8035 - Breedlove AJ250/SF Plus Electro Acoustic
10296 - Breedlove Atlas Solo Series C350/CR
10284 - Breedlove Cascade C25/CRE Electro
10285 - Breedlove Cascade OM/CRe S Cutaway
10287 - Breedlove Passport C250/COe Electro
10288 - Breedlove Passport D/MMe Electro
10289 - Breedlove Passport D250SMe Electro
10299 - Breedlove Passport PLUS D/CME Electro
10292 - Breedlove Passport Plus C250/SBe Elect
7979 - Breedlove Passport Plus C250SFE
4282 - Breedlove Passport + D/SFE Elec Sunburst
10301 - Breedlove Passport Plus D250/SB Electro
10300 - Breedlove Passport Plus OM/CMe HH
10294 - Breedlove Retro D/ERe with LR Baggs
10295 - Breedlove Retro OM/ER Orchestra Electro
10298 - Breedlove Revival OM/SMe Top Burst
4283 - Breedlove Solo C35/Sme Electro, Natural
10069 - Brian May Rhapsody Electro, Black
10068 - Brian May Rhapsody Electro, Cherry
10071 - Brian May Rhapsody Electro, Red
10070 - Brian May Rhapsody Electro, Sunburst
10219 - Cort NDX50 Electro Acoustic Guitar, Nat
10221 - Cort SFX-E NS Electro, Natural Satin
10125 - DRL 008 8 String Electro Acoustic Guitar
10124 - DRL CT09 Thinline Electro Acoustic
4769 - EKO Ranger EQ Vintage Series, Black
8905 - Eko Ranger Vintage 12 String w/Fishman
9206 - Epiphone EJ200CE, Natural
5157 - Epiphone EJ200CE Jumbo Vintage SunB.
9542 - Faith FMETB Mercury Electro Parlour
9104 - Faith Saturn Cutaway High Gloss FSCEHG
8300 - Faith FECS Electro Acoustic Guitar
10320 - Fender CD60CE Mahogany
7881 - Fender Kingman SCE, Dreadnought, Nat
6929 - Fender Stratacoustic, Electro, Black
10194 - Fender T-Bucket 300CE, Amber
6930 - Fender Telecoustic, Electro, Black
10243 - Fender Tim Armstrong Deluxe
10106 - Fylde Alchemist Electro Acoustic
7867 - Gibson J200 Standard Electro in Natural
7032 - Gibson J200 Standard Jumbo Guitar
8241 - Gibson J200 Studio, Vintage Sunburst
10150 - Gibson J35 Electro Acoustic Guitar, Nat
10143 - Gibson LG2 American Eagle
10147 - Gibson SJ100 Modern Classic V.Sunburst
8091 - Jimmy Moon 0003CE Electro Acoustic
4555 - Jimmy Moon Bryan Adams Signature
4554 - Jimmy Moon PF0003 Electro, Pau Ferro
6948 - Jimmy Moon RD3, Electro, Natural
9552 - LAG T300AE Electro Acoustic Guitar
7302 - LAG T66ACE Auditorium Cutaway Electro
7972 - LAG T200ACE Auditorium Cutaway Electric
5403 - Levin LD60CE, Dreadnought Electro, Nat
9243 - James Neligan NA72CBB Electro Acoustic
0000 - Levin - 5 models in stock now
8277 - Martin DC15ME Dreadnought Cutaway
6404 - Northwood R70 00 14fret Electro, Natural
4400 - Northwood R80, 000V Electro, Natural
6403 - Northwood R80, 0M Electro, Natural
9841 - Ovation Adamas 1581-7 Electro Acoustic
5093 - Ovation CDX24 Electro Acoustic in Natural
10033 - Ovation Celebrity CC44S AB, Autumn
10031 - Ovation Pro Elite 2078AX
10032 - Ovation Pro Elite TX 1868TX Super
10151 - Ovation Pro Speciality 1773AX-4 Natural,
9299 - Peerless Martin Taylor Maestro
10095 - RainSong BI-JM1000N2 Graphite Guitar
10094 - Rainsong S-DR1000 Graphite Guitar
10038 - Rainsong S-DR1000 Graphite Guitar
9820 - Rainsong CO-DR1000N2
9821 - Rainsong CO-JM1000N2
9819 - Rainsong CO-OM1000N2
9818 - Rainsong CO-WS1000N2
9814 - Rainsong DR1000 Graphite Guitar
10097 - Rainsong H-DR1100N2
10100 - Rainsong H-OM1000N2
10098 - Rainsong H-WS1000N2
9815 - Rainsong JM1000 Graphite Guitar
4812 - RainSong OM1000
10082 - RainSong P12 Parlor
10084 - RainSong P12 Parlor in Blue
10086 - RainSong P12 Parlor in Green
10085 - RainSong P12 Parlor in Pewter
10087 - RainSong P12 Parlor in Red
10088 - RainSong P14 Parlor
10091 - RainSong P14 Parlor in Blue
10092 - RainSong P14 Parlor in Green
10093 - RainSong P14 Parlor in Pewter
10089 - RainSong P14 Parlor in Red
9824 - Rainsong S-DR1000N2 Dreadnought Std
9823 - Rainsong S-OM1000N2 OM Studio Electro
9822 - Rainsong S-WS1000N2 WS Studio Electro
9827 - RainSong SG Shorty Gloss Shorty Series
9828 - RainSong Shorty Fine Texture SFT Model
7974 - Rainsong WS1000 Graphite Guitar
5257 - Satori YD18EQ, Dreadnought Electro, Nat
5256 - Satori YD28EQ, Dreadnought Electro, Nat
5252 - Satori YD28HEQ, Dreadnought Electro, Nat
8234 - Satori YD42EQ Electro Acoustic
5255 - Satori YO28HEQ, OM Electro, Natural
9536 - Sigma 000MC 15E Electro Acoustic Guitar
10303 - Takamine EG340SC, Pre-Owned
0000 - Tanglewood - 17 models in stock now
10118 - Terry Pack PLSR Parlour w/Pre-Amp
9615 - Terry Pack SJRS Small Jumbo LR Baggs M1A
8007 - Vintage Gordon Giltrap Signature
9561 - Vintage VEC1400 Electro Acoustic
9535 - Walden CG570CE Electro Acoustic Guitar
8307 - Westcoast SW201BK -VT Acoustic Guitar
8305 - Westcoast SW201RDS VT Electro Acoustic
8306 - Westcoast SW201VT Acoustic Guitar
6960 - Yamaha CPX500 Electro in Red
9190 - Yamaha CPX700 Electro Dusk Sun Red
8020 - Yamaha CPX700, Tinted Finish
9191 - Yamaha FGX730SC Electro Acoustic, Nat.
9192 - Yamaha FJX730SC Electro Acoustic, Black
6965 - Yamaha FX370C Electro Acoustic in Nat.
8141 - Yamaha SLG110S Silent Steel String

Bass Guitars

8687 - Breedlove Passport Plus B350/CB4
10297 - Breedlove Solo BJ350/CMe4 Fretless Bass
10067 - Brian May Bass in Cherry with Gig Bag
4910 - Bridge Cetus Electric Double Bass
10108 - Cort A4 4 String Bass Guitar, Natural
10107 - Cort A4 Custom Z 4 String Bass Guitar
10109 - Cort A5 5 String Bass, Open Pore Natural
10105 - Cort A5 OPBC Bass Guitar
10110 - Cort B5 5 String Bass Guitar, OPN
10213 - Cort GB75WBL 5 String Bass, White Blonde
10242 - ESP LTD B204 SM, Natural, Pre-Owned
4882 - Fender USA 62 Vintage Precision Sunburst
10166 - Fender 75 Jazz Bass in Natural
9083 - Fender Am Special Jazz Bass, Sunburst
9353 - Fender Am St Hand Stained Ash Jazz Bass
9231 - Fender Am Standard Jazz Bass, Sunburst
7943 - Fender Am Stan Precision Bass, Sunburst
9727 - Fender FSR Precision, Sea Foam Metallic
8113 - Fender Modern Player Available To Order
9367 - Fender Select Jazz Bass, Amber Burst
9284 - Fender Standard Jazz Bass, Arctic White
8287 - Fender Standard Jazz Bass, Brown S.burst
9909 - Fender Standard P Bass, Lake Placid Blue
10113 - G & L M2000 4 String Bass Guitar, Honeyburst
10112 - G & L M2500 5 String Bass, Honeyburst
9703 - G & L Tribute Series JB2, Natural
9138 - G&L L2000 Tribute Bass, 3-Tone Sunburst
9702 - G&L L2500 5 String Bass, Walnut
9593 - Gibson Firebird Studio Reverse 70s Bass
9575 - Gibson Grabber 3 70s Tribute Honeyburst
10074 - Gretsch G6073 Electrotone Bass, Burgundy
0000 - Levin - 7 models in stock now
8073 - Lodestone Primal Artist
8075 - Lodestone Primal Instinct J Bass, Green
8079 - Lodestone Primal Instinct P Bass, Green
8080 - Lodestone Primal Instinct Pbass Sunburst
8081 - Lodestone Primal Pro in Chignal Blue
8082 - Lodestone Primal Pro 4, Tobacco Sunburst
8174 - Lodestone Primal Pro 5, Chignal Blue
4179 - Marleaux Consat Custom 5, Satin Black
10279 - Marleaux Consat Sig 4 String Bolt On
5713 - Marleaux M Bass Custom 5, Maple & Walnut
10278 - Marleaux Votan XS Deluxe, Black
10216 - MusicMan Sterling 4, Blue, Pre-Owned
4703 - MusicMan Stingray 2EQ, Blue Pearl
4781 - MusicMan Stingray 3EQ, True Gold
4920 - MusicMan Stingray 5, Black
8997 - Musicman Sterling SB14 Bass, Sunburst
5110 - NS Design NXT Electric Double Bass
9002 - Overwater Aspiration Deluxe Bass, Black
8435 - Overwater Aspiration Std 4, Black Cherry
7849 - Overwater Contemporary Jazz, Trans Blue
9009 - Overwater Contemporary 5-String Bass
9867 - Overwater Inspiration Jazz PJ 4 String
10102 - Overwater J Series Deluxe 4, Natural
7259 - Overwater Perception Std 5, Bubinga
10152 - Overwater Progress Deluxe, Pre-Owned
9418 - Rickenbacker Bass, Jetglo Rick Kemp
5121 - Rockbass Streamer LX5, Black
7204 - Squier Classic Vibe Precision 50s Blonde
9072 - Squier Vintage Modified 70's Jazz, Nat
9517 - Squier Vintage Modified Tele Bass, Black
9704 - Stagg BC300 Lefthanded 4 String, Nat
4417 - Steinberger Spirit XT2 4 String Bass
9428 - Tobias Toby Standard IV Bass Guitar, White
9653 - Warwick Bass Guitar Accessory Gig Pack
6447 - Westcoast BG2, Natural or Trans Red
6446 - Westcoast BG4 Neck Thru Body, Brown
6445 - Westcoast BG5 Fretless, Natural
6448 - Westcoast JB5, Trans Amber
8438 - Westcoast JP1 4 String Bass in Black
8437 - Westcoast JP1 4 String Bass in Trans Red
10120 - Yamaha BB1024X 4 String, Caramel Brown
4649 - Yamaha BB2024X, Vintage White
9350 - Yamaha BB424 Bass Guitar in Black
9351 - Yamaha BB425 5 String Bass Guitar, Black
9352 - Yamaha BB425 5 String Bass, Sunburst
9000 - Yamaha RBX170
10314 - Yamaha RBX170EW Bass
8999 - Yamaha RBX5A2 5 String Bass, Black
6360 - Yamaha SLB200 Silent Double Bass
4331 - Yamaha TRB1004J, Trans Black
10307 - Yamaha TRBX304 Bass
10308 - Yamaha TRBX305 Bass
10310 - Yamaha TRBX505 Bass

Classical Guitars

0000 - Azahar - 6 models in stock now
10290 - Breedlove Passport N250/COe Electro
7365 - Jose Ferrer 3/4 Size Classical Guitar
0000 - Mendieta - 6 models in stock now
9482 - Ovation 1616 Classical Guitar, Pre-Owned
0000- Raimundo - 4 models in stock now
0000 - Ramirez - 10 models in stock now
5828 - Roberto - 3 models in stock now
5481 - Strunal Electro Classical Guitar
9404 - Takamine G344RC Electro, Wine Red
0000 - Tanglewood - 4 models in stock now
8351 - Westcoast - 5 models in stock now
10323 - Yamaha CGX102 Guitar
10321 - Yamaha NTX700 Guitar

For full guitar details, pricing and photos, enter the number next to each guitar model into our SKU search facility on the website.

Guitar & Bass

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The joys of being single...

Keeping things simple has been the philosophy of many guitar players and guitar makers over the years. And what could be more 'to the bone' than a single-pickup guitar? As this issue's cover story shows, not only was the solitary coil a crucial part of the electric guitar's development, but players such as Leslie West, Johnny Thunders and Malcolm Young have proved the potency of going it alone in the pickup stakes. It makes for a fascinating tale that takes twists and turns in unexpected places.

That said, our cover feature isn't the only delight to be found within these pages; some prime gear, including a new Martin acoustic, gets the *G&B* review treatment. The one and only Albert Lee is just one of the stars to take some quality time to talk to us, and there's a bunch of vintage, workshop and tuition articles to sink your eyeballs into.

Finally, if you haven't checked up on our website in a while, we urge you to do so. The address is www.guitar-bass.net for even easier reference, and it'll be full of the kind of mighty fine news, reviews and features you expect – and deserve – from *Guitar & Bass*.

But for now, it's time to stop talking about the content and get on with reading it. We hope you enjoy the issue...

John

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Please note, we reserve the right to edit where we feel it is appropriate, or to print extracts from longer correspondences

STAR LETTER

COLLECTION REFLECTION

What happens to guitars in the end? It can be tricky for the inheritors

I was wondering if you could help. My Uncle Chris sadly passed away recently and, as he had no children of his own, his guitar collection was passed on to me. I don't know much about guitars (my uncle taught me some chords when I was a teenager, but it never really stuck), so I don't know what the guitars are worth.

I'm not desperate to sell them, but on the other hand, if any of them are worth a lot then I could use the money to help out other members of my family. How do I find out how much they are worth?

William Stratford *via email*

Rosetti

Written a Star Letter? Contact Rosetti on 01376 550033 to claim your Rickenbacker goodie bag

G&B **We get a lot of enquiries from people asking about how much a guitar they own, or have been given, is worth. The answer, a lot of the time, is never particularly straightforward. The simple response of 'whatever the buyer is willing to pay' is accurate, but not very helpful. A full discussion of the subject is an article in its own right, but here follows a quick guide to some of the steps you can take.**

First off, work out the model, make and year of the guitar, if you don't already know. This can often be done with an internet search, especially if there is a serial number. If this doesn't help, contact a knowledgeable friend, take it to your local guitar shop, or post a photo on a relevant guitar forum and ask for their assistance.

Once that's been established, search the small ads, or internet sites such as eBay or Gbase to find out what other similar guitars are fetching. Bear in mind that if the condition of your guitar is different, or parts have been changed, the price listed on these sites may well differ from what you should expect to get from it.

If you suspect the guitar you have might be considered vintage or special in any way, it might be worth taking it to a reputable vintage dealer to get it valued. They may well charge for the service, but if it is a valuable instrument, it will be worth the money.

Once you've established some kind of valuation, the next stage is to work out the right way to sell it for you. There are two ways of involving a music retailer; you can either sell it directly to them, or ask them to put it up for sale in their shop and you'll receive the money when it's sold. Either way, you'll get usually get less money than if you sell it privately (the shop will either buy it for less than they think they can sell it for, or take a percentage of the final sale, depending on the deal). However, there are advantages to this. Firstly, they'll check to make sure the guitar is working (we've come across plenty of instances where people have been bequeathed guitars and not checked to see if they were working before trying to sell them), so you don't have to worry about any post-sales issues.

We always advise people, especially when dealing with instruments that have some sentimental value, to do as much research as possible and to proceed cautiously. We also advise people to be realistic; just because a relative raved about how good a guitar is – or bought it 30 years ago – doesn't mean that it's exceptionally valuable. In addition, the secondhand and vintage guitar market, like a lot of other markets, hasn't been at its strongest in the past couple of years. For William, and everybody else out there in the same position, we wish you the best of luck...

PERMANENT FIXTURE

If you could please settle this argument I'm having with my wife (and by that I mean back me up) I'd be a very happy man. What are we arguing about? Well, I've played guitar every day since I started playing 37 years ago... and not a day goes by that I don't play at least some part of *Amazing Grace*.

Why? Well, the clever answer would be because it was one of the first songs I learned to play... and it reminds me of that great feeling we all got when we learned a song when starting out. The real answer, though, is probably closer to it simply being a habit, and I still really enjoy playing it. My wife is sure that other guitarists aren't hung up on *Amazing Grace*, or indeed any one song, to the extent that they play it every day. So which one of us is right?

Andy Drakoulis *via email*

G&B **Do we look stupid enough to get involved in a domestic, Andy? Erm, point taken. We don't believe there's anything odd about having some piece of music that you play all the time. However, a quick straw poll of the office didn't yield any song, riff or scale that people played every single day. So we're going to throw this one open: If you have a song you play every day, please let us know, and why.**

Craig's guitars, two home-built and one fine Japanese repro

MAKING LIFE BETTER

I have been so inspired by your workshop features over the years that I thought I would send you a picture of the fruits of my labours. The guitar on the left was inspired by guitar journalist Neville Marten's and built from parts from Stewmac and finished by me in Manchester Guitar Tech lacquer. The one in the middle is a homage to a 1953 Nocaster, and the one on the right is actually a 1980s Greco, from the same batch that you acquired for your feature on recreating a 1959 Les Paul. The Greco has Bareknuckle PGs and the Strat has Bareknuckle vintage correct 1963s. They all play and sound great and I am thrilled with my humble collection – so many thanks for the inspiration.

Craig Hooper *via email*

G&B **We're darn pleased that you've enjoyed the workshops over the years, and they look like a fine trio of guitars, so you should take all the credit. Congratulations!**

A ROBBIE CHALLENGER

Just a line to say don't change anything too much for 2014 – keep going as you are – the mag is just right. The Sid Bishop and Phil Harris columns are brilliant every time. How about an updated pic of Sid? I also enjoyed the Robbie McIntosh article – I still have the excellent Foster Brothers LP (not on CD sadly) and when I was in a long term group – er, band – in the '70s we did a pretty fair reading of *Count Me Out*. Robbie was right, the dress and hairstyles were caught suddenly out of date for 1977 but the musicianship on the album is first rate. The only annoying part is a weedy string machine; no disrespect to Pete Wingfield who played it, as it was the technology of the time. I enclose a shot of the LP cover; which one is Robbie? Although a Telecaster is my favourite squeeze, I thought I would also throw in a pic of my 1983 Gibson Challenger which, after a hard life, enjoys its retirement with me and still gets a run three or four times a month. It sounds amazing. Anyway, keep it up, and I remain a happy subscriber.

Michael Bentley *via email*

G&B **Many thanks for the kind words, Michael. As regards to Sid's photo, the idea was to have a photo of him around the time he was working on Denmark Street to fit in with the column. However, wethinks you may get your wish a bit later this year. As for the photo of Robbie, we're not going to spoil the fun the readers will have trying to spot '70s-era Robbie McIntosh. And we doff a respectful cap to any one who plays a Gibson Challenger – that was a rock machine to cut your teeth on back in the day. Long may it continue.**

Left, the Foster Brothers LP; right, the underrated Gibson Challenger

Woke up this mornin'... NEWS

NAMM 2014

The biggest musical instrument industry event on the planet was about to get underway in California as this issue of *G&B* went to press, and rumours of what we could expect were rife

When it comes to sifting through the guitar news at this time of year there's a rather large elephant in the room in the shape of NAMM – the National Association of Music Merchants trade show – which opens its doors in Orange County, California just as we go to press on this issue. Going by the whispers and rumours that have reached *G&B* so far, it promises to be a corker. Gossip states that Gibson will be launching no less than 24 new guitars, many of the Les Paul variety, plus a very unusual Firebird that will divide opinion, while Fender is poised to celebrate 60 years of the Strat in style with at least six fresh models plus a Jaguar dedicated to Kurt Cobain and two new signature Jazzmasters. PRS is talking of a new amp, plus a new Single Cut and even a Floyd Rose model, while amp highlights are set to include vintage brands Park and Supro relaunching in luxurious handwired, boutique form; an entirely new bass line from Fender; Orange, taking their Dark amp a good deal further; and you can be sure that the likes of Marshall and Mesa/Boogie will blasting out their latest innovations from all corners of the show. We also hear whispers of an electric guitar pickup with entirely new technology from Fishman. An enormous gear wonderland is absolutely guaranteed, so be assured we will not rest until we have unearthed all the big stories, the most mind-boggling innovations and the most temptingly unput-downable gear on display... and of course a healthy dose of the crazy, wacko stuff too. Be sure to join us next month to wallow in the greatest guitar show on earth.

A decade of the Gretsch Custom Shop

To mark the 10th anniversary of the Gretsch Custom Shop a limited run of 10 very special Duo Jet NOS guitars have been built. The chambered mahogany bodies are topped by laminated maple and finished in radiant red pearloid, with dual Seymour Duncan DynaSonic pickups providing the bark. See www.gretschguitars.com for details.

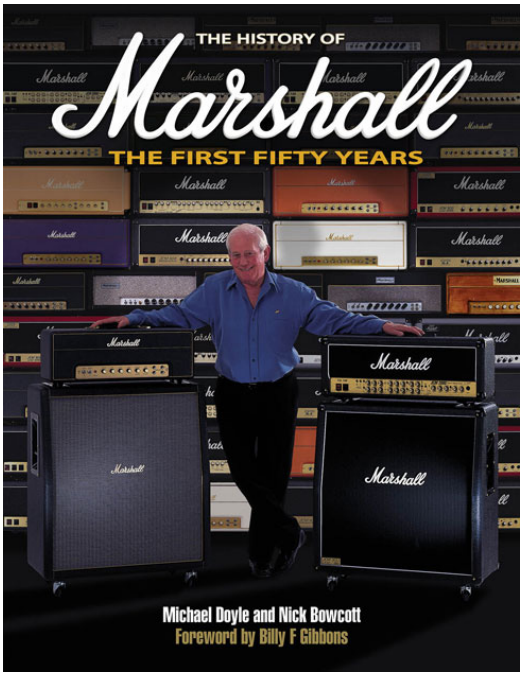
YAMAHA BUYS OUT LINE 6

Yamaha has acquired modelling innovators Line 6, of Pod fame, in a deal that they say will see the company continue to operate as a 'wholly-owned subsidiary' – meaning, it seems, that Line 6 will carry on as it is with its current management, only with a huge stack of cash behind it. Yamaha manufactures everything from motorbikes to golf carts but their emblem, for those who haven't spotted it, is made up of three tuning forks; instruments may not be the biggest earner but they are clearly still key to the brand's identity, and this promises to be a good deal.

New London Hendrix museum

A £1.2 million grant is in place to enable the Heritage Lottery Fund to recreate the interior of Jimi Hendrix's '60s flat in Marylebone, complete with replica furnishings of the time, as a permanent museum. Expected to open in 2015, it's not clear as yet what exhibits will be on show – but you'd hope a guitar or two would be on the wish-list.

THE HISTORY OF MARSHALL



Officially endorsed by the company themselves, *The History Of Marshall: The First Fifty Years* is the most exhaustively chronicled tome of the world's most famous amp manufacturer ever put together. Co-author Michael Doyle released his original book, *The History Of Marshall*, in 1993, but now he's got together with Marshall marketing manager and ex-*G&B* contributor Nick Bowcott to overhaul, revamp and add to the work to such a degree that it's completely unrecognisable. Pictorially it's certainly vastly superior, boasting pictures of all the classic models inside and out, with wonderful repros of the company's massive back catalogue of promo materials. The early years are documented beautifully, including in-depth interviews with Jim Marshall himself, and it brings things right up to date. Even offshoot brands like Park, CMI and Narb get the full treatment with plenty of illustration. It's 400 pages of essential reading for the Marshall fan.

Wilko & Roger Daltrey release a blues album

Wilko Johnson had pledged to record another album before terminal cancer finished his career but no one expected him to enlist Who vocalist Roger Daltrey. *Going Back Home* consists of 10 songs culled from the breath of Wilko's career, plus a version of Dylan's *Can You Please Crawl Out Your Window*. Release date is 10 March and it'll be on the legendary blues label, Chess, which has been rebooted specifically for the occasion.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Jim Hall 1930-2013

The influential jazz guitarist passed away on 10 December 2013 aged 83. Known for his work with saxophonist Sonny Rollins, Paul Desmond and Ella Fitzgerald Hall and many others, he was recognised for his improvisational and arranging skills, creativity and not least his mellow, rich tone, most often rendered on a Gibson ES-175 or a D'Aquisto archtop. As recently as 2008 he recorded a double album, *Hemispheres*, with his former student and avant garde guitar icon Bill Frisell, showing he'd lost none of his immense talent.

From Plunk to Plonk

In partnership with the Armida Winery, Fender has gone into the vino business. They claim the reds 'exude the same opulence and bold character for which Fender guitars are known' and the white 'embodies the enduring reputation, quality and dependability of each of its instruments' so if you fancy a twangy tipple check out http://www.fender.com/fender-wines.

Jimmy Page Turns 70

On 9 Jan this year Led Zeppelin's legendary axeman reached his 70th year. They'll be no hanging up of the Les Paul just yet, as he's currently working on some of his old music from the archives that should be released this year. He's also busy remastering the first three great albums of Led Zeppelin's back catalogue, and companion discs of unearthed never-before-released material are to see the light in 2014, with more to follow.

Allman Bros Down Two Guitarists

Allman Brothers guitar duo Warren Haynes and Derek Trucks have both announced they will be leaving the band after this year's tours; the outfit are slated to play 14 nights during March at New York's Beacon Theatre alone. The pair have been with the Allmans for 25 and 15 years respectively – Haynes was 28 when he joined, and Trucks just 19 – but side projects have separately flowered for both men. Got *Ramblin' Man* down pat? Get your CVs in at www.allmanbrothersband.com.

Calendar SHOWS, GIGS, FESTIVALS, WORKSHOPS

The 18th Nantwich Jazz, Blues & Music Festival

17-21 APRIL

Stan Webb's Chicken Shack, Martin Turner's Wishbone Ash, From The Jam, Big Country...
WHERE? **Nantwich Civic Hall & The Crown Hotel**
TICKETS **£11.50-£22.50**
CONTACT **http://nantwichjazz.com**

Newton Faulkner

6 FEBRUARY-17 MARCH

Faulkner's adept, percussive style of acoustic playing makes him a truly dynamic performer.
WHERE? **Many dates across the country**
TICKETS **From £19.50**
CONTACT **www.newtonfaulkner.com or www.gigsandtours.com**

HRH Blues

21-22 MARCH

The new edition of the Hard Rock Hell festivals at Haven, Gwynedd, North Wales brings us 25 blues rock acts over two days – Dr Feelgood, Simon McBride, Stevie Nimmo, Harry Manx and more
TICKETS **From £93.75 (eight people sharing)**
CONTACT **www.hrhblues.com or call 08700 110034**

Ultimate Rhythm And Blues Tour

21 JANUARY - 7 MARCH

The Yardbirds, the Zombies, the Animals, Spencer Davis & Maggie Bell celebrate 50 years of R&B
WHERE? **Across the whole country**
TICKETS **From £25**
CONTACT **www.ents24.com**

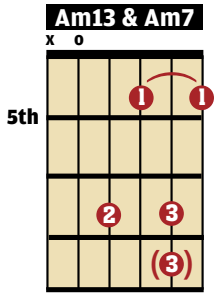
Great British Guitar Show

1-2 MARCH 2014

Exhibitors, seminars, artist appearances, demos, as well as the huge range of guitars other gear.
WHERE? **New Bingley Hall, Birmingham**
TICKETS **£12 (advance)**
CONTACT **www.ukguitarshows.co.uk**

The Lost Chord

When the funk grabs you – as occasionally it surely must – this little move might come in handy. Either hammer-on to the eighth fret on the B string with your pinkie, or slide up your third finger to move seamlessly from Am13 to Am7, creating James Brown-style groove aplenty.



Album reviews

Matt Schofield
FAR AS I CAN SEE
Provogue

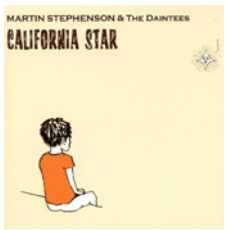
No one has ever doubted Schofield's ability; his guitar skills are fearsome and his employment of them supremely judged. The only debate has been whether he can create a record to really drive home that exceptional talent. This album delivers in spades. Schofield's muscular, blues can shake your soul while his dreamy, jazzy excursions ebb and flow with an elemental drive. A defining work from a maturing force.

Tommy Castro & The Painkillers
THE DEVIL YOU KNOW
Alligator

Veteran Castro has taken on a new band in the Painkillers and they have inspired a raw, vital and funky album that may well be his best yet. His brand of blues has always been gritty, fiery and rocking, but this rifferama is positively incendiary while Castro's gruff vocals are equally mean. Joe Bonamassa pops up to lend a riff or two, as does Tab Benoit, but Strat man Castro does just fine on his own.

Martin Stephenson & The Daintees
CALIFORNIA STAR
Barbaraville

Durham-born songsmith Stephenson returns with a finely honed collection that saunters between country, folk, soulful blues, rock'n'roll and even reggae. His rich, distinguished croon and lyrical dexterity carry these stylistic wanderings with an almost casual ease, and his fretwork is bang on the money at every stage of the journey. A gem that tempts us to sample his newly-reissued back catalogue too.



Robben Ford
A DAY IN NASHVILLE
Provogue

Ford has found a formula which augments his R&B infused blues to perfection, with nine new songs recorded in just one session at the legendary Soul Kitchen studios and backed by a killer band. From the lazy groove of *Ain't Drinking Beer No More* to the searing licks of *Midnight Comes Too Soon* the whole set floats on peerless musicianship and restrained virtuosity. Undiluted, fresh and utterly infectious.

The Graveltones
DON'T WAIT DOWN
Lagoon Dog

In the tradition of feral garage rock duos this London pair trade in the kind of spiky, piledriving riffage that ignited the careers of the White Stripes and the Black Keys. It's elemental, raw and, rather refreshingly for this genre, is backed up by a host of addictive hooks and smart lyrics, all howled in stirring style. Jack White-style squeally soloing is carried off with gusto, and the quieter moments are adorable too.

Red Dragon Cartel
RED DRAGON CARTEL
Frontiers

Legendary Ozzy Osbourne sideman Jake E Lee seemed to disappear in the mid-'90s but he's been stockpiling the riffs and now he's back to unleash them with Red Dragon Cartel. It's dark and heavy and the Ozzy/Sabbath influence is clear, but the power-pop aspect that defined much '80s metal is unrepentantly mined here too. For those who loved *Bark At The Moon/The Ultimate Sins* era Ozzy, this is a bombastic banker.

Pat Metheny Unity Group
KIN
Nonesuch

Metheny's *Unity Band* album bagged him his 20th Grammy. Multi-instrumentalist Giulio Carmassi has since joined the line-up and this intelligent, textured, many-layered work is the first fruits of their labours. You could say the starting point is jazz, but that's merely the launch pad for a technicolour sonic assault that is simply enormous in its scope. Very ambitious, challenging and undeniably brilliant.

Sarah Jarosz
BUILD ME UP FROM BONES
Sugar Hill

With an immense talent for banjo, acoustic, electric, mandolin and beyond, Jarosz still transcends her virtuosity by delivering an album of such heartwrenchingly-sung compositions that the stunning instrumentation could almost be a sideshow. A modern take on bluegrass is the foundation, but Americana in all its forms is utilised to mould a contemporary and tender work that blurs the boundaries.

Rosco Levee & the Southern Slide
GET IT WHILE YOU CAN
Red Train

Glorious, chugging widescreen southern rock, all the way from Kent, but it's carried off with such conviction that it's impossible to hold that against them. This album out-Skynyrds and out-Allmans anything the bands themselves have done of late, and Levee's evocative, swampy slide work is the real deal, with *Whiskey Blues Goodnight* more than proving the point. No one is doing this stuff better right now.

SNAP JUDGEMENTS

Kim Simmonds & Savoy Brown
GOIN' TO THE DELTA
Ruf
A swaggering set of Chicago blues inspired stompers to get any roadhouse jumping. Simmonds' assured licks always thrill

Carousels & Limousines
HOME TO ANDY'S
Pulteney
With a nod to Bruce Springsteen and a wink to the Faces, this earthy debut is home to foot tapping anthems and free wheelin' alt pop

Pierre Bensusan
ENCORE
DADGAD Music
A 3CD set that cherry picks 35 tracks plucked from gigs spanning 1974 to 2013. A fitting way to herald the career of a DADGAD master and peerless performer

Supersuckers
GET THE HELL
STEAMHAMMER / SPV
'If you don't like the Supersuckers, you don't like rock'n'roll,' stated Lemmy Kilminster. Big riffs, menacing punked up groove and potent hooks prove his point

Saiichi Sugiyama Band
SMOKEHOUSE SESSIONS
Cedar Mountain
Bluesbreaker jaunt from the British-based 'Japanese Clapton' and collaborator with Pete Brown, recorded live with bite and swagger

Robert Dahlqvist
SOLO
P&C Despots
Ex-Hellacopters guitar man's laid-back debut is rendered in his native Swedish, which does nothing to trouble its wistful, tender charm

Photo Credit: Jeff Spicer

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Great tone, smooth feel, consistent performance from gig to gig. Bass strings that sound better for longer, removing the hassle and expense of frequent string changes.

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The POWER Of One

At the dawn of the electric age one pickup was all you got, but then came the '50s and '60s with switching choices aplenty. Is there still a place for a guitar with the bare minimum of electronics, reflecting everything back on the skills of the player? Michael Heatley thinks there is...

'To me, it was a tree with a microphone. It was very simple, it could do everything I needed it to do.' Leslie West's description of the no-frills, single-pickup Gibson Les Paul Junior he used to find fame and fortune with '60s hard-rockers Mountain says it all. If you're a guitarist with talent, you should be able to achieve your goals with the simplest of instruments.

Not everyone would, of course, agree. The fact the big three – Telecaster, Stratocaster and Les Paul – have two, three and two pickups respectively attests to that. And Fender's recent Jim Root signature takes the Tele into active pickup territory, a long way away from its utilitarian country-and-western beginnings. That said, the first variation on the Tele formula, the Esquire from 1950, was in its most famous form a single-pickup job. But more of that later...

Let's wind back two decades to 1931, the year Adolph Rickenbacker unveiled a basic six-string instrument with a small circular solid body. This was known as the 'frying pan' due to its shape. As the first production instrument with an electro-magnetic pickup, designed by partners Paul Barth and George Beauchamp, it is now considered the forerunner of the modern guitar.

When two successive patent examiners questioned whether the instrument was 'operative,' Adolph Rickenbacker sent

Left, the 1931 Rickenbacker prototype; right, a '37 Gibson ES-150 with 'Charlie Christian' blade pickup

Rickenbacker made Bakelite lap steels and also Bakelite electric Spanish guitars, like this example from 1936, sometimes marketed as a Premiervox

guitarists to perform for them at the Patent Office in Washington, DC, to prove it was. By the time the patent was finally granted in 1937, others had caught up. Even so, Rickenbacker – who only started to enjoy major success after Adolph sold the company in 1953 – had made an impressive mark.

Their Model B electric guitar made in 1935 looks amazingly futuristic even now. It was made using the advanced injection moulding process but abandoned when the Bakelite – the plastic material used to construct early radio sets – was found to expand with increased temperatures, resulting in tuning problems. Eldon Shambin of Bob Wills' Texas Playboys was, legend has it, not allowed to use his on stage because, in his boss's unenlightened words, 'When I hire a guitar player I want him to look like a guitar player'!

If the Gibson ES-150, introduced in 1935, isn't the granddaddy of all electric guitars, then it certainly has the most grandchildren. It was endorsed by jazz player Charlie Christian, of Benny Goodman's band, who found electrification transformed his playing. No longer was the guitar a part of the rhythm section, it could now punch out solos that, on record, were sometimes mistaken for a saxophone.

Gibson's advertising patter was seductive. 'You hold it, tune it and play it just as you would any guitar, and in appearance it is only slightly different. But strike the strings lightly and you have a tone that can be amplified to whatever volume you desire. Adjust the tone control and you change the tonal colour from a rich bass to a brilliant treble.' All this, remember, with just one pickup.

While Rickenbacker's horseshoe-shaped pickups had encircled the strings, Gibson's was designed by Walter Fuller. The man attributed with pioneering the pickup as we know it today joined Gibson in 1933, and soon afterwards the straight-bar pickup was introduced on a Gibson Hawaiian steel guitar.

On the ES-150 this bar directed the power of two magnets, bolted below the guitar's arched top, towards the strings. If one string was found to be louder than the rest, Gibson corrected it by simply cutting a notch underneath it in the protruding bar. Though crude by later standards, the ES-150 was a pioneering concept matching old and new technology that established itself as the premier inter-war instrument. At $77.50, the ES (for Electric Spanish) 150 was not within the range of every would-be guitar hero. Another 75 dollars would be needed to buy an amplifier, plus $13.50 for the hard case.

Paul Bigsby, whose name is associated with the vibrato tailpiece, is credited with building the first ever modern solidbody electric guitar for country picker Merle Travis. The guitar had a Bigsby 'blade' pickup, and a walnut fiddle tailpiece with a string-through-body design. Travis contended that Leo Fender borrowed his Bigsby guitar for a week in 1948, and it is thus said to have influenced the creator of the Strat and Telecaster – though Fender denied this.

What is certain is that things hotted up when, soon after, Fender entered the electric guitar market with the single-pickup and then twin-pickup Esquire. The twin-pickup version

TIMELINE
Single-pickup landmarks

1931 Rickenbacker 'Frying Pan' created

1935 Gibson ES-150 introduced; ES signifies 'Electric Spanish'

1948 The Bigsby Travis guitar is completed

1949 Gibson's longest-running electric, the ES-175, makes its debut

1950 The single-pickup Fender Esquire enters production

1954 The classic Les Paul Junior is introduced

1956 Fender unveils its Musicmaster entry-level six-string

1958 Gretsch's Tennessean appears alongside its plusher stablemates

Left: this late '40s Rickenbacker Spanish had a body and neck made by Harmony. The wraparound pickup was no problem for steel players but a big disadvantage for regular guitarists

Left, a beautiful and iconic single-pickup Bigsby – in terms of design, one of the most important guitars of the 20th century

Total simplicity and maximum twang: a blonde finish mid-'50s Fender Esquire

would be renamed first the Broadcaster and then the Telecaster in 1951, and it would set the standard for mass-produced electric guitars for decades to come. The Esquire, now offered only with one pickup, stayed in the range for almost 20 years and it would later find favour with the likes of Jeff Beck (who used a '54, bought from the Walker Brothers guitarist John Maus, with the Yardbirds) and Steve Cropper. The Esquire retained the three-way selector switch which, instead of offering pickup options, now functioned as a pre-set tone control or bypass switch, offering great versatility for a single pickup guitar.

Fender's next single-pickup product, the Musicmaster, also enjoyed two decades in production, from 1956 to 1975. An entry-level effort, its body was an uncontoured slab of wood, while the neck, at 22.5", was shorter than the standard Fenders to which the student could graduate when skills and savings had grown. (A 24" scale version, introduced in 1964, was named the Musicmaster II.)

Ads extolled the virtue of an instrument 'specially designed for old and young players with small fingers'. It also proved a hit with female players for that reason. The Musicmaster was also made available with a simple vibrato unit as the Bronco, while two-pickup versions were known as the Duo-Sonic and Mustang respectively.

Price-wise, the Musicmaster ($119.50) was almost half the price of the Telecaster ($199.50), but Fender, being first and foremost an amp manufacturer, had a masterplan. The guitar was marketed alongside 'plug in and play' combos like the Princeton and Champ, combining both speaker and amplifier in one portable package.

As you'd expect, Gibson were not about to stand by and leave the student market to their biggest rivals. They grabbed a piece of the action with the launch of the Les Paul Junior in 1954, copying the outline of the original Les Paul to create an uncontoured mahogany body. The pickup was a P90 single-coil, the tailpiece a version of the bar that replaced the trapezoid unit on Les Pauls that same year, and the price a modest $99.

The Les Paul TV was similar to the Junior but boasted a natural 'limed' finish similar to that of the Telecaster. By 1958, the Les Paul Juniors and twin-pickup Specials had become double-cutaway instruments. All, incidentally, had 'dot' fret markers in place of the 'full-fat' Les Paul's prominent inlays, and simpler volume and tone knobs.

Gibson's next 'cheapie', the Melody Maker, went into production in 1959 and was again priced at 50 cents below the magic $100 mark. Retaining a single-cutaway outline, ↦

1959 Gibson re-addresses the learner market with the Melody Maker

1961 Melody Maker becomes a double-cutaway

1969 Brief reign of the Dan Armstrong/ Ampeg Plexiglas guitar begins

1971 Les Paul Junior is phased out of production

1976 Eddie Van Halen first assembles his home-built single-pickup monster

1986 Fender Japan reintroduce the Esquire, discontinued in the US in 1969

1999 Fender announce the Tom DeLonge single-pickup Strat

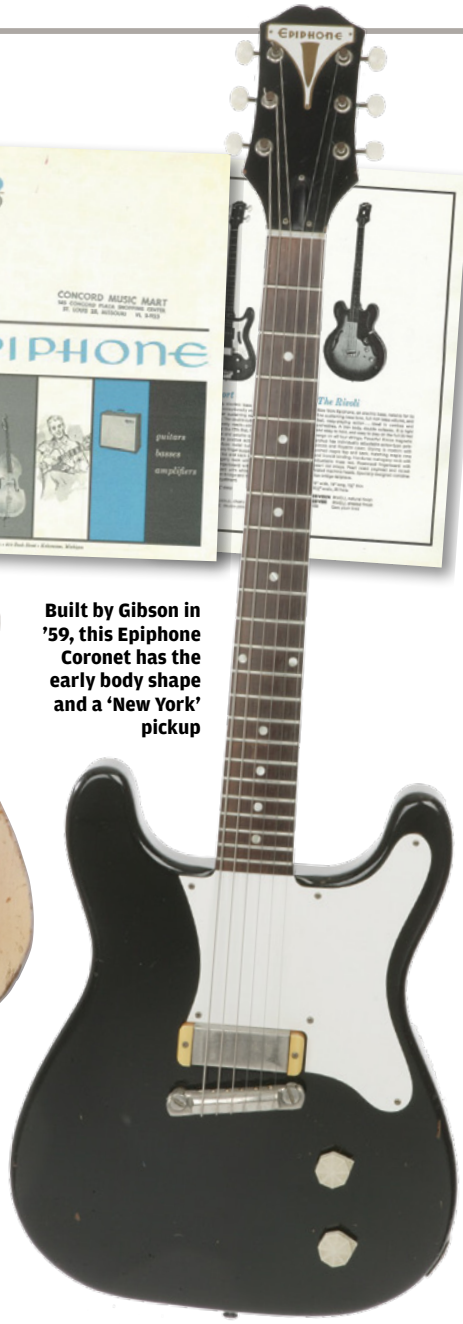
2007 Gibson re-introduce the Melody Maker name in a series of four guitars

2009 The Joan Jett Signature Melody Maker brings girl power to the market

but with a thinner body (35mm to the Junior's 44mm) and a narrower headstock, the Melody Maker had a single-coil pickup mounted with the controls and output jack on its scratchplate to save money. The body felt less substantial and more SG-like compared with a Les Paul Junior, and the single pickup was no match for a P90.

Its introduction came at a time when Gibson was struggling to shift Les Paul Standards, but, with rock'n'roll mania now taking hold post-Elvis, the company was targeting youngsters flocking for guitar lessons or teaching themselves in their parents' garage. The cut-price Gibsons of this period were all of a very high standard, a Brazilian rosewood fretboard making them more than a mere 'student' guitar. The Melody Maker never quite achieved the classic status of the Junior; the latter adopted an SG outline in the '60s when all the Les Pauls were revamped and the model was discontinued altogether in 1971. That same year, the SG-100 was introduced as a cheap variant of the (usually dual-pickup) SG with pickguard-mounted controls for affordability, but didn't last long.

Left, a reissue of a single-cut Gibson Melody Maker; right, a 1957 Fender Esquire belonging to Mick Ralphs



Built by Gibson in '59, this Epiphone Coronet has the early body shape and a 'New York' pickup

Simple Recipe for Success

The appeal of a design like the Les Paul Junior is in its sheer simplicity. The more wiring a guitar has, the more signal loss there is, so a single-pickup guitar into an amplifier with no effects is surely the recipe for the ultimate tone machine.

The Junior's P90 pickup, introduced in 1946, is warmer-sounding than a standard single-coil unit, with a higher output and sweet trebles. The P90 (also called a 'soapbar' or a 'dog-ear', depending on the shape of the cover) took over from the 'blade' pickup introduced on the ES-150 in 1936, and by the late '40s it had become the standard Gibson pickup. Its adjustable polepieces and shallow but wide windings meant the Junior has always had a more substantial sound than the twangy, western-optimised Telecaster.

The Junior's one-piece, solid mahogany body – routed for only one pickup – combines with set-neck construction to allow both neck and body to vibrate as a single unit. Gibson are particularly proud of their tight-fitting glued neck joint, maximising 'wood-to-wood' contact between neck and body with no air space to absorb vibration.

Last but not least, the wraparound bridge/tailpiece, while regarded by some as suspect in terms of intonation, combines simplicity and functionality while offering maximum sustain, thanks to its simple yet effective union of the strings and body.

Sunburst single-cut Les Paul Junior dating from 1957

The budget Gibsons then endured two decades out of the spotlight until the new wave's utilitarian ethos led to players appreciating their affordability and durability anew. Pre-'76 exceptions proving the rule were, inevitably, Leslie West and his biggest UK fan, Mott the Hoople's Mick Ralphs.

Many of the cheaper Gibsons have been used over the years by slide players to great effect – as has the single pickup Dan Armstrong-designed Ampeg 'see-through' guitar of 1969. These were expensive to make and lasted little more than a year in production, though they have since become collectors' items. Players included Keith Richards, Tom Petty and Leslie West, who was given the prototype. Keith played his on the Stones' '69 world tour, Bill Wyman toting a matching bass.

Epiphone, founded in 1903, sold out lock stock and barrel to Gibson in 1957 – but, while most famous for their '60s semi-acoustics, their thin-line solid-bodies, most notably the Crestwood, were more than 'poor man's SGs'. Humble Pie man Steve Marriott was an enthusiastic devotee. ➔

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Left, a '56 Rickenbacker Combo 400; above, a '50s Hofner Senator

A 1961 Gibson SG Junior and a Gibson Firebird I, as used by Eric Clapton

Meanwhile, back at Gibson, their range of semi-acoustics that began with the ES-150 had continued in 1949 with the ES-175. Traditional in looks compared with the Fender Broadcaster, it was the company's first electric guitar to be designed as such from the outset and its use of pressed maple laminate would become standard on Gibson semis. It is still being made today. The ES-175's combination of single cutaway and P90 pickup was one Gibson would repeat in the LP Junior and elsewhere, but the simplicity of the original design, with just a volume and tone knob, twin f-holes and Gibson's trademark back-angled headstock was attractive in itself. Other single-pickup variations on this theme have been the ES-330T thinline, with a single P90 halfway between neck and bridge, and the ES-125/225.

The instruments manufactured by Fred Gretsch provided the most radical alternative to the Gibson-Fender duopoly in the early days of rock'n'roll. His products were favoured by pioneers like Duane Eddy and Eddie Cochran, and Gretsch offered his guitars in a wider range of colours than his competitors. Pickups – humbucking units named the Filtertron – were usually numerous to match. A 'student model' was offered in the shape of the cheaper single-pickup Chet Atkins Tennessean and Anniversary models,

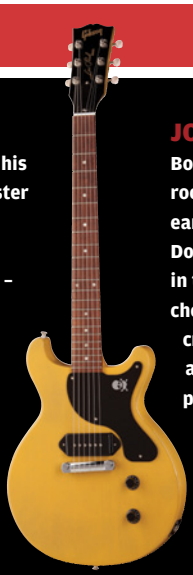
SINGLE-PICKUP LEGENDS

Six well-known players who have declared that 'one is more than enough'...

OMAR RODRÍGUEZ-LÓPEZ

Omar, of At The Drive-In/Mars Volta fame, inspired the Ibanez ORM1. This resembled the Jet King but was heavier, being made in mahogany, and had a 24" scale neck. It had a double-blade pickup with one control (volume) and was designed to be played loud through effects.

For his current band Bosnian Rainbows, Rodríguez-López uses a custom Ibanez double-cut with a bolt-on neck ('I wanted it to feel like half of a baseball bat,' he says) and a humbucking pickup. Having used single coil-equipped guitars in past bands to reflect his playing high up the fretboard, he was now after a fatter sound. Designed with Mike Taft and with the addition of a tone knob, Omar's creation has come full circle; it resembles a left-handed Les Paul Junior!



BILLIE JOE ARMSTRONG

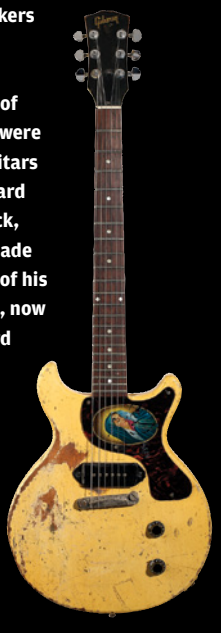
The frontman of Green Day began his career with a Fernandes Stratocaster copy named 'Blue'. His current favoured six-string is the Les Paul Junior, of which he owns about 20 – 'everything from Specials to regular dogear [P90] pickup to TV colour to sunburst ... It's not just a collection, it's things I actually put to use and play.'

His favourite is the first, a 1956 example named 'Floyd'. 'I plugged it in and it was exactly the sound that had been in my head for so many years, and then more... that real punchy midrange sound.' Gibson's signature version, introduced in 2006, is based on 'Floyd' and combines the best features of a vintage Junior with a slim tapered neck, and a hum-cancelling H-90 pickup.

Armstrong can be heard playing his Les Paul Junior on every Green Day album dating from and including 2000's *Warning*.

JOHNNY THUNDERS

Born John Anthony Genzale Jr, Thunders lived the rock'n'roll lifestyle to the full in his 38 years on earth, firstly as a member of the New York Dolls and then fronting his Heartbreakers in the late '70s. His 'brazen, strutting chords', in the words of one admiring critic, 'provided a manual for a host of aspiring axemen', and those chords were played on a Les Paul TV. Johnny's guitars had the rarer tortoiseshell pickguard instead of the more common black, while the only modification he made was to instal Grover tuners. One of his guitars, retrieved after his death, now hangs proudly in the New York Hard Rock Café. Mick Jones of the Clash was another early punk-era single-pickup Gibson user, his Junior (bought in emulation of Thunders) contrasting effectively with Joe Strummer's Telecaster. After one of his pair of Juniors was destroyed at a gig in 1977 he switched to a regular Les Paul.



Fender's Musicmaster, far right, has been played by everyone from David Byrne to Liz Phair

In the '60s the Epiphone Coronet, above right, was a fine alternative to the Gibson SG Junior

offered in 1958, and the Gretsch 6119 of 1961 with stripped-down electronics. Nashville great Atkins was Gretsch's answer to Gibson's TV personality Les Paul, and he made sure his guitars got onto the covers of his LPs (there's a Tennessean on '61's *Chet Atkins Workshop*).

George Harrison briefly played a Gretsch Tennessean in the Beatles' early '60s career, but had earlier strummed the best-known 'basic' Rickenbacker, a 1962-vintage single-pickup 420. John Lennon had favoured a German-built Hofner Club 40 in those days before 'name' American instruments were either affordable or widely available. European designs offered a respectable build quality and playability for a fraction of the price of the 'real thing'. Hofner guitars – also, of course, favoured in four-string form by Paul McCartney – were affordable but eminently playable. Shadow-to-be Hank Marvin had played a Hofner Congress 'with a half-inch action' until he could afford to buy his iconic Strat. Also around in numbers was the Rosetti Lucky 7, the product of Dutch company Egmond and available in one-pickup form in the UK for 14 guineas.

The '60s belonged to the Strat, Tele and Les Paul – but as the decade ended, Eric Clapton showed the world just what could be done with just a single pickup. The Gibson Firebird he used for the entire first show of Cream's final Albert Hall date in 1968, a Firebird I, the only hardtail variant, was then less desirable ↦

LESLIE WEST

The Mountain frontman bought his first LP Junior from neighbour and future session ace Waddy Wachtel. That one he sold to the lead singer of the Vagrants; his famed Mountain-era single-cut sunburst Junior was found at Matt Umanov's shop in New York and was much admired by English touring musicians such as Mick Ralphs, who all went out and scoured the pawnshops to buy their own. West now markets his own pickup, the Leslie West Mountain Of Tone. 'The P90 is the same old single-coil that they used in the old Juniors and it made a lot of noise; when you were playing loud you couldn't hear it, when you turned it down you heard this hum. So the guys down at Dean started making pickups and we made it so it's like a P90 but a humbucker, so it doesn't make any noise. So that's been great. That pickup, that sound, that tone, but without that noise.'

JOAN JETT

Feisty but diminutive (she's five feet five) the rhythm guitarist of the Runaways turned solo star adopted the Gibson Melody Maker because of its light weight. She bought her 1968 example from Eric Carmen in 1977 and changed the treble pickup for a 'Red Velvet Hammer' pickup handwound by steel guitarist 'Red' Rhodes and his son. 'I had that pickup in my blonde Les Paul and had fallen in love with it,' she explained, 'so I put them in all my guitars. I love my Les Paul but it is very heavy, so that was a major reason I switched.' Jett played it on such '80s anthems as *I Love Rock'n'Roll* and *Bad Reputation*, inspiring contemporary artists like Brody Dalle and Allison Robertson of the Donnas. Joan's signature Melody Maker, based on a '60s double-cutaway model, came out in 2009.

MALCOLM YOUNG

Malcolm's trademark 1963 Gretsch Jet Firebird was given to him by ex-Easybeat (and AC/DC producer) Harry Vanda, and has featured on the vast majority of the band's studio recordings from the '70s to date. Modifications made to the double-cutaway, semi-hollow guitar include stripping it back from red to natural wood and, more crucially, removing both the neck and middle pickups (the latter having added in the mid '70s) and changing the bridge. Young has played other Gretsch models on various tours, but only if his main guitar was out of commission. A component of his sound comes from heavy-gauge string sets, which include a wound G. He has a signature model available via Gretsch with a choice of one or two pickups – though not the sock he originally placed in the empty pickup cavity to stop feedback!

than its counterparts with two or three mini-humbuckers. (He used his ES-335 for the second show; the *Farewell Cream* movie mixes songs from both.) Joe Bonamassa currently totes a '64 Firebird in emulation of the master.

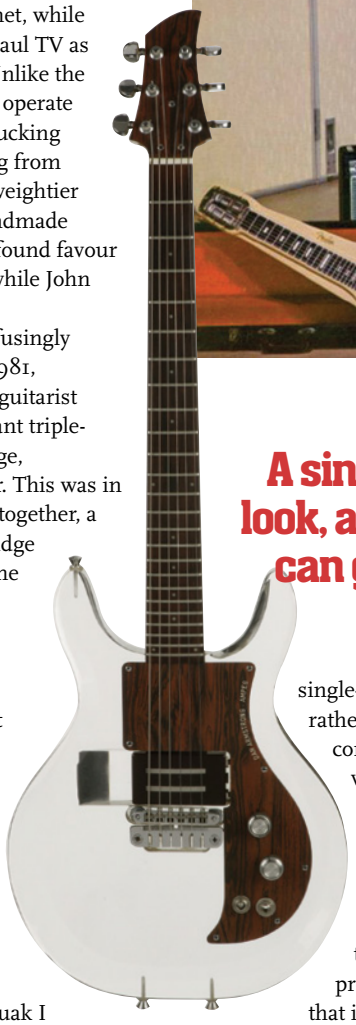
The '70s and '80s saw British guitar makers weigh in with solid single-pickup offerings. Shergold's Meteor was a descendant of the mid-'70s Hayman Comet, while Gordon Smith used the Les Paul TV as the template for their GS-1. Unlike the 'original', their pickups could operate in both single-coil and humbucking modes, giving sounds ranging from Fender's cutting edge to the weightier Gibson. The result, a fine handmade guitar at an affordable price, found favour with Buzzcock Pete Shelley, while John Otway wields one to this day.

Back in the States, the confusingly named Hamer Prototype of 1981, endorsed by superstar Police guitarist Andy Summers, boasted a giant triple-coiled humbucker at the bridge, nicknamed the Motherbucker. This was in fact two pickups sandwiched together, a DiMarzio PAF nearest the bridge and a single-coil from the same maker. A three-way switch selected bridge humbucker, single-coil or both simultaneously. Paul Hamer claimed it was possible 'to get anything from a sharp Stratocaster tone to a richer Les Paul sound,' while Summers was credited with design input.

The '80s saw the Japanese, when not engaged in copying classic designs, stirring the single-pickup pot. The Westone Paduak I boasted an early attempt at active circuitry, while later in the decade Washburn's Japanese-made G40V had a triple-coil unit with push-button selectors. Fender Japan's Heartfield subsidiary offered the RR8D, with built-in distortion.

The most influential hard-rock guitarist of the '80s, Eddie Van Halen, broke through late in the previous decade with a single-pickup guitar. His search for a sound meatier than a Strat to power his eponymous band led him to home-build a guitar from $130 worth of parts. With a humbucking pickup at the bridge and just one knob, a volume control, the guitar – decorated with Schwinn bicycle paint in a red and white criss-cross pattern – was simplicity itself. Father Jan was a saxophone player, and Eddie's since suggested he was trying to create a horn-like tone.

In Van Halen's wake would come a legion of copies from the likes of Charvel, Jackson, Ibanez and Kramer. These pointy-headstocked single-pickup items are now rather unfashionable and, consequently, can be good value on the secondhand market.

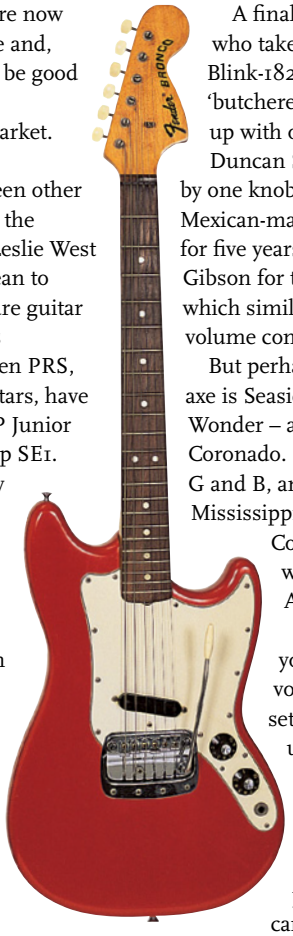


1969 Dan Armstrong Plexiglas guitar

A single pickup has a uniquely purposeful look, and if it's placed in the sweet spot then it can give a sound of unbeatable character

The current century has seen other new entries to the marketplace. Leslie West teamed with Dean to produce a signature guitar that improves on his traditional Gibson. Even PRS, guitar-makers to the stars, have paid homage to the LP Junior in the eastern-made single-pickup SE1.

Gibson resurrected the Melody Maker name in 2007 with four electrics – a Les Paul, Explorer, SG and Flying V – in an attempt to combat Fender's 'Stratocaster for every pocket' policy. The idea of owning a US-made guitar with 'Gibson' on the headstock remained alluring, though the series' relation to the original Melody Maker seemed to be their basic construction values and single pickups rather than shape or attributes. The absence of a tone potentiometer makes the variation of volume control and picking-hand position all-important.



A '72 Fender Bronco, as used by Arctic Monkeys

A final tip of the hat is owed to those who take matters into their own hands. Blink-182 frontman Tom DeLonge 'butchered' his Strat in the '90s, ending up with one humbucking Seymour Duncan SH-8 Invader pickup controlled by one knob. This was duplicated in a Mexican-made production model available for five years from 1999 before he moved to Gibson for the DeLonge Signature ES-333 which similarly combined a humbucker, a volume control and a hardtail.

But perhaps the ultimate single-pickup axe is Seasick Steve's Three-String Trance Wonder – a guitar that resembles a Fender Coronado. Its three strings are tuned to G, G and B, and he bought it for $75 in Como, Mississippi from a man named Sherman Cooper, who had it nailed to the wall as a decoration. The pickup? An old Harmony... taped to it.

So is a single-pickup guitar for you? If you need to vary your volume or tone within your band's set by swapping pickups, or you use a blended sound like the Strat's out-of-phase tones, then maybe not... but a single pickup has a uniquely purposeful look, and if it's placed in the sweet spot then it can give a sound of unbeatable character. Are you ready to strip down and get real?

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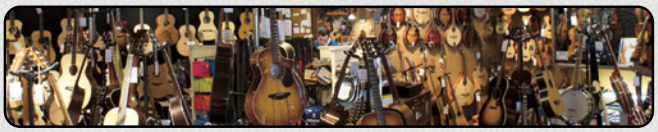

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70 Not Out

Country rock hero Albert Lee is still applying his blinding skills on both sides of the Atlantic and preparing to celebrate his 70th birthday with a new album and two sold-out concerts in London. Interview by **David Gallant**

'When Saint Peter asks me to chronicle my time down here on earth, I'll be able to say – with pride, if that's allowed – that for a while I played rhythm guitar in a band with Albert Lee.' So said Emmylou Harris – and it's a sentiment shared by most of those lucky enough to have shared a stage with one of the finest and most fleet-fingered players of his age. Albert Lee first made his name on the '60s rock and R&B scene, not with music aficionados, but with his peers. This man was – and still is – the very definition of the guitarist's guitarist. A move to the States in the mid -'70s launched a stellar sideman career and the affable, self-effacing Lee is now an undisputed legend, instrumental in shaping the sound of country rock and a major influence on later neo-traditionalist and alt-country artists as well as being rated up there with the pantheon of all-time country guitar greats such as Chet Atkins, Clarence White and Jerry Reed.

Music has always been at the core of Albert Lee's life. When he was a boy, there was a piano in the house; 'I bashed away on it', he demurs. His parents recognised that their son had a musical ear and decided that he should have some lessons. 'Which I did for two to three years,' he continues, 'but then stupidly dropped them.'

Shortly afterwards Lee discovered Lonnie Donegan and borrowed guitars from school friends, as he ➔

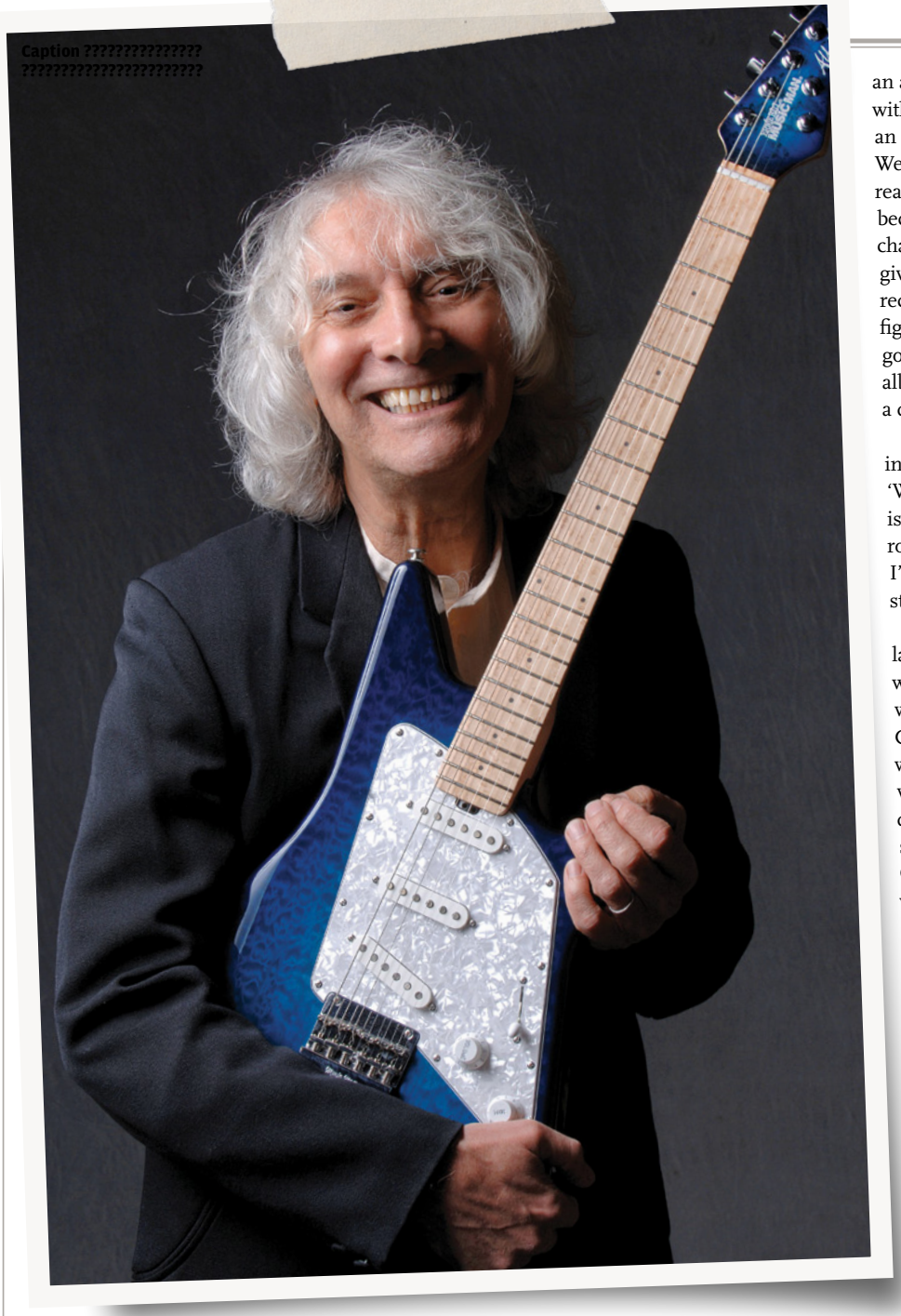
Gear

Guitars
Music Man Albert Lee signature, '52 reissue Fender Tele, '52 Custom Shop Relic

Amps
Fender Tone-Master

Effects
Korg A3 multi-FX

Albert Lee accompanied by Hogan's Heroes – and his Huss & Dalton MJ acoustic


Caption ??????????????? ???????????????????????

didn't actually own one, and started to play. Talented and driven, it wasn't long before he hit the London scene. 'A lot of musicians used to gather at the Two I's coffee bar in Soho. I didn't get down there until 1961, but within a few months I'd become part of the house band backing whoever got up on stage.' Later Lee was to join R&B singer Chris Farlowe as part of his backing band, the Thunderbirds. 'By the time I joined the Thunderbirds, they were playing down at the Flamingo where Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames were the house band – and they were terrific. There were also lots of great guitar players who used to hang out down there... like Andy Summers, John McLaughlin and Eric Clapton, who I used to meet up with regularly.'

Many of these guitarists also used to hang out in the music shops on Charing Cross Road, and Lee had a friend who was a salesman at Selmer's. 'Ray had a band with a friend of his called Tony Colton and they'd written a bunch of songs that they wanted to make into an album. They managed to get a record deal with MGM in the UK, and so we put together an outfit called Poet And The One Man Band. We did a couple of showcases but nothing really happened, and that band eventually became Head, Hands & Feet, with a couple of changes in the personnel. We thought we'd give it another crack and went out to get a record deal, and we had Atlantic and Capitol fighting over us! Eventually we landed a pretty good deal with Capitol and ended up doing an album in 1970 – a double album. First album, a double... how pretentious is that?!'

Within weeks Head, Hands & Feet were in the States promoting their new album. 'When I got to California I thought, this is where I want to be. I'd started out with rock'n'roll and all the way through the '60s I'd been playing R&B, so I knew all of that stuff. But I'd always wanted to play country.'

After Head, Hands & Feet broke up in late '72 Lee ended up with the Crickets, who were doing a tour of the UK. 'They wanted somebody to take the place of Glen D Hardin for a couple of gigs – he was getting in late for the tour, because he was working with Elvis. We played a gig down at the Speakeasy. They loved it and said "Do you want to do the whole tour?" Okay, great! So there I was off on the road with the Crickets. And then Glen D finally arrived. He stuck around for about a week – I don't think he liked some of the little places we were playing. After being at the Hilton International in Las Vegas, coming to working men's clubs in the North of England didn't appeal to him, so he went back to LA.'

Because Lee was hanging out with the likes of the Crickets, he got to meet up with a lot of his musical heroes in LA. 'I used to play in this little bar in Calabasas, which is about five miles from where I live now. It was a very small room, but they always had good bands in there – good players who would go in there and just sit in. Jerry Allison from the Crickets took me along there one night and Don Everly was singing and Al Perkins was on steel guitar, and that became a regular gig for me. I went along there almost every night and became Don's big buddy.'

Lee's manager from his Head, Hands & Feet days was also in Los Angeles, and he had moved on to managing rock and blues singer Joe Cocker. 'Joe had been rehearsing this band to go out on a major tour of the US, but it wasn't working out – they were getting drunk and stoned every night and weren't getting much work done, and they ended up by having a big fight. So I get this phone call – "we need a drummer and guitar player immediately because we're going out on the road in two weeks' time, big arena stuff". So there I was, out on the road with Joe for about 18 months.

'Then Joe decided to sell up and go back to the UK, and that left me at kind of a loose end. I knew most of the guys in the Emmylou Harris band, though, and ➔

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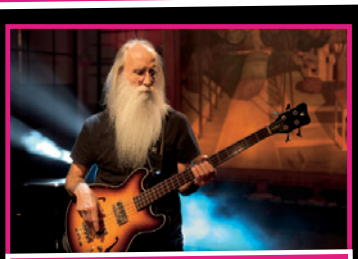

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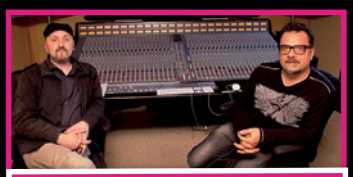

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Albert's Music Man signature is fitted with Seymour Duncan Alnico II's. Right: with Tele, back in the day

Albert Lee made with the queen of country rock and her high-temperature backing outfit became a milestone in his career. 'A lot of people heard that album and said "who's this guy?"'

Work started to pick up, and by the early '80s Lee was one of the first-call session players in LA. 'I left the Hot Band in 1978 – although I needn't really have done that,' Lee reflects today. 'But I took time off to do my *Hiding* album for A&M, which the whole band played on. Then when I was ready to go back and join Emmylou, she'd got another guitar player and I thought, it's not really fair of me to blag my way back into the band, so what do I do here? I thought what I should really do is to get my own band together, and go out and do it.

'But then I found myself back over in the UK working on a session with Eric Clapton. Part of Eric's regular band was on the session too, and at the end of the four or five days he said "Do you want to go out on the road? I did the last tour without a rhythm guitarist and it didn't really work". I thought, this could be fun – why not? So in early 1979 I went off with Eric, and that lasted about five years.

'Eric was going through some difficult times. He wasn't a happy guy and he was firing people left, right and centre. In fact, he fired and replaced the whole band twice – but much to my surprise, I managed to survive twice! But eventually, of course, I got fired – that was in 1984.'

A player like Albert Lee, especially one fresh from a huge-name gig, wasn't going to get left on the sidelines for long. A few months earlier, in 1983, country/pop legends the Everly Brothers had started talking to each other again. 'They decided that they were going to do a big reunion gig in the Royal Albert Hall and they picked me as their lead guitar player,' Lee explains. 'Then the following year they said they were going to do an album and go on the road. I'd just got fired by Eric, and thought well, that's perfect – and I've been touring and recording with the Everlys for the past 26 years!'

Guitar & Bass is catching up with Lee on one of his UK tours with Hogan's Heroes, a band that Lee fronts with his longtime friend Gerry Hogan. 'I've

I was a big fan of James Burton, who was playing with her, and I'd met him a couple of times. On the second or third Emmylou gig that I went, to the band said "Oh, Albert, we were just talking about you... what are you doing the next few weeks? James is going off to play with Elvis – will you come and do some gigs with us?" What could I say – and as it turned out, James decided to stay with Elvis. Actually, he really wanted to do both gigs, but there was no way he could – the timing wasn't working out and Emmylou was on the ascendancy and Elvis was busy. So thanks to James and Elvis, I ended up with Emmylou. I realised, at that very moment, this is it. Here I am, living in LA, playing with the kind of band I like, and working regularly.'

Emmylou Harris had been told by her record company that she needed to get a 'really hot band' together if she wanted to make it, and The Hot Band they duly became. The 1976 album *Luxury Liner* that

'Eric wasn't a happy guy. He replaced the whole band twice, and I survived twice!'

And another thing...

Lee owns the guitar that Elvis played in *Loving You*, *King Creole* and *GI Blues* – a blond Gibson J-200. 'Everybody thinks that he uses his own guitar in the movies, but he didn't,' explains Albert, 'so I've got the guitar that belonged to the studios, Paramount." Clapton gave Lee his '58 Les Paul Custom.

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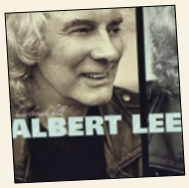
Listen up

HEAD HANDS & FEET
Head, Hands & Feet
(1971)
Released in 1971, with many of the songs written by band member Tony Colton. *Country Boy* introduced Lee to an American audience

EMMYLOU HARRIS
Luxury Liner
(1976)
Emmylou Harris's release which saw Lee take over from James Burton in Harris's Hot Band to break land speed records in chickin' pickin'

ALBERT LEE
Heartbreak Hill
(2003)
Lee's favourite solo album, released in 2003 on Sugar Hill records. Features an instrumental version of *Luxury Liner* plus guests Brad Paisley and Vince Gill



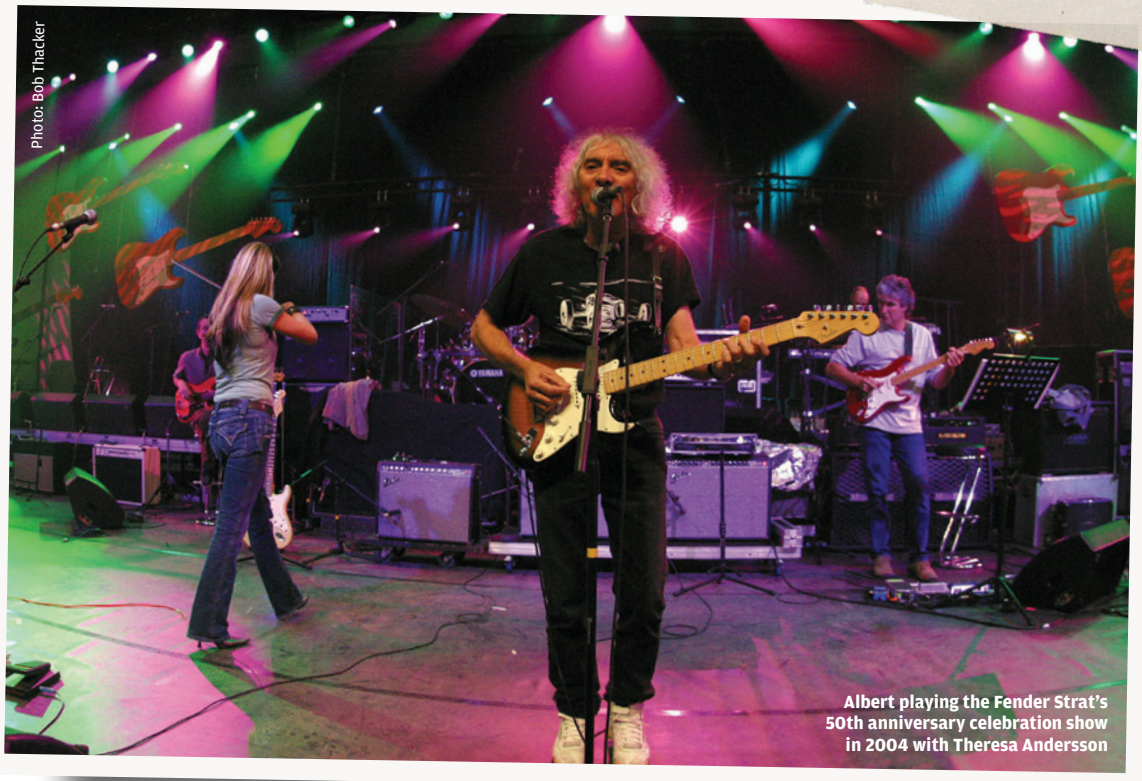


Photo: Bob Thacker

Albert playing the Fender Strat's 50th anniversary celebration show in 2004 with Theresa Andersson

known Gerry since the mid-'60s. He had this steel guitar festival, which he did for over 20 years. He'd had a number of guitar players turn up to play at these festivals, and in 1987 he asked me to sing some of the songs on my album, which we did. I thought, wow, this is great fun. So we decided to get together and do a European tour every year. And like my gigs with the Everlys, we've been doing that for the last 26 – or is it 27 – years.' When Lee's in Europe and not with the Heroes, he's working with Bill Wyman's Rhythm Kings. 'Yeah, I'm going straight out with Bill once I've finished this tour with the Heroes,' he confirms.

Albert Lee was associated with Fender for much of his playing career, his artistry earning him the nickname 'Mr Telecaster'. 'I gave my original one to Ray [Smith] from Head, Hands & Feet who went and sold it 'cause he needed the money – I wish he'd told me!' Albert laughs. 'That was a '59, one of the first with the rosewood fretboard. On one of my first trips to the States I found a '53, and then when I was with Emmylou I found a '51 – I think it was a Nocaster.

'Of course I've also got some later Teles, but the older ones seem to sustain better – the newer ones sound a little brittle. It could be something to do with the finish, as the law changed regarding the type of finish they used on these guitars. It gives it a different resonance. But Fender do a '52 reissue model – I have two of them, and they're pretty good. They also gave me a '52 Custom Shop relic not so long ago, and it's just like an old guitar – you wouldn't know the difference!

'When I was playing with Emmylou on the Tele I was trying to sound like James Burton, and he used .008"-.038" strings with a .012" on the third string. Really light... I don't know how he did it. But now I'm mostly playing the Music Man guitar, and the frets are a little heavier and so I'm using .010"-.046".'

> *'Every effect you need is in the Korg A3. I like a bit of reverb, delay and chorus'*

Albert also discovered the B-bender Telecaster, and still occasionally employs its possibilities today. 'I first heard it with Clarence White, although I did play Carl Perkins' guitar in the mid-'60s. He had a big old Gibson ES-5 that had a little metal bar, so when he played an open A chord and pressed this little lever with his thumb, it would raise the second string – but he could only do it in that position, of course.

'Once I heard Clarence I thought, "How's he doing *that*?" Then I read about it in the paper and it turned out that it all worked via the strap. And when I was on tour with Heads, Hands & Feet in Chicago we went to see the Dillards, and Billy Ray Latham, the banjo player, had one of these Teles with a B-bender in it, so I went backstage to see how it worked. I just said "I love that, where can I get one?" It turned out that there was a guy called Dave Evans in LA who was making them, so I immediately contacted him when I got back to LA, and bought one. He made the whole body, and you would put your own neck and pickups on.'

Lee now owns three of the Evans instruments and runs these, along with all his other guitars, through a Fender Tone-Master head. 'They made a run of them for a couple of years about 10 to 12 years ago and I was lucky enough to get a couple. It's a 100W amp and it's really good quality. I use 4x12" cabs and I've cut ports in the back so that they're open-back – I much prefer the sound of an open-back cab.'

In terms of effects, Lee uses a Korg A3 multi-FX. 'Every effect you need is in that, and it's nice and clean. I like a bit of reverb, a bit of delay, and a little chorus.'

After a life lived for the most part on the road, as he turns 70 Lee is happy to spend most of his time on home turf. 'After 40 years living in the US, I've finally put a band together! I'm enjoying working with them... and I'm enjoying being at home too.'

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ROLLIN' AND TUMBLIN'
JELLY'S BLUES

Photo: Tina Korhohen

Source Symbols

Stephen Dale Petit lays bare the story of his latest project, *Cracking The Code*, an album recorded with the help of names like Hubert Sumlin, Mick Taylor and Dr John. Interview by **Michael Heatley**

Back in the early '80s, the SDP or Social Democratic Party threatened to break the mould of British politics. Fast forward three decades and a new SDP, Stephen Dale Petit, promises to do the same to the British blues scene – and stands every chance of being more successful. He has some heavyweight friends to help him achieve his goal; even the portrait for his new album, *Cracking The Code*, is taken by a celebrity, Pattie Boyd, the former wife of Messers Harrison and Clapton and the inspiration for *Layla*. And while Stephen was born and brought up in California, he's chosen the UK as his home turf.

The title of *Cracking The Code* is a reference to songwriting. 'I once heard an acclaimed songwriter say creating a song comes in any number of ways; it's just a question of finding a way in, spending time with it and allowing it to come to fruition,' Petit explains. 'She called it "cracking the code". Once I decided on the title, it became clear that it meant a lot of things. And so I let that happen.' The conclusive factor was engineer Vance Powell, who has worked with Buddy Guy, Keb' Mo' and the White Stripes, arriving in London for the vocal sessions with a book on Bletchley Park in his luggage – a coincidence that confirmed the choice.

The striking 'walking on water' cover contains clues related to the title, and the fact it has a Hipgnosis-style feel is no coincidence. 'I met with Storm Thorgerson in the last 18 months he was alive,' Stephen reveals. 'I already had a location in mind, a place called Hill Garden in Hampstead Heath. There's nothing faked. I'm actually standing on a table with about a millimetre of water beneath my shoe. Those balloons are suspended by bricks and tied with fishing line.'

Is this album a suitable starting point for first-time Stephen Dale Petit listeners? 'If you're looking for more straight-ahead blues,' considers Petit, 'I've done that before. My mission, my belief and my commitment is to see that blues is not a museum piece... making music that's modern and contemporary and stands shoulder-to-shoulder with anything being released right now that has the [blues] DNA deeply at its core. I pull no punches. There are plenty of other places people could start.'

Those places include his first album, 2008's mostly instrumental *Guitararama*, or 2010's *The Crave*, which contained a version of *Crossroads* orchestrated by Chris Elliott, who worked with Amy Winehouse and Mark Ronson. The two titles bridging the gap between there and *Cracking The Code* were 2011's *BBC Sessions* and the following year's live *At High Voltage*. Petit ➔

Gear

Guitars
SDP's live armoury in 2014 is likely to include a Firebird, an ES-355, a signature SG 'and a Les Paul... or two, or three...'

Amps
Marshall, Two-Rock, Mallard, '59 Fender Bassman, Audio Kitchen Little Chopper, Gibson Les Paul amp

Effects
Many and various, including Sweet Sound UltraVibe, Klon Centaur, E-H Electric Mistress and Z.Vex Woolly Mammoth and Fuzz Probe

Storm Thorgerson's album artwork

Stephen with Gibson ES-355, shot by Pattie Boyd

Photo: Pattie Boyd

regards both as legitimate albums, though he admits his earlier BBC sessions are hard to listen to. 'It's raw and there are warts,' he says. 'At the same time, it's fantastic to have those sessions. The BBC is an institution and it's an honour and a privilege.'

The feel of *Cracking The Code*, he reveals, was inspired by *High Voltage*. 'It was a live set; you have one chance to do it. It so happened we hit a sweet spot on stage, and that's better than any other experience as a musician. The guy who mixed it, Dennis Weinreich, did such a good job. The texture of the guitar was raw, and it was untidy in the way the distortion was behaving. All sorts of things had a big impact on me.'

The current album features his three-piece backing band, whose ages range from 19 to 21, as well as an impressive array of guest stars. But there's also a feeling of less is more, and where *The Crave* had multiple guitar tracks, the aim this time was different. 'I wanted to reach a place where there is one guitar that's massive and huge,' he points out. 'I didn't want the distortion to be tidy; I wanted it to be ragged, as long as the amp was behaving like that – obviously it has to be created at the time of performance.

'On *The Crave*, the recording in the room sounded stonking. In the mix it started to get sanded away, when it got mastered a little more got sanded away... an extra element got lost. This album is very real, vibrant and intact in terms of the sonic textures. That was absolutely worth the trip to Nashville.'

All the rhythm parts were put down live, with the band all playing in one room. The main guitar on every track was SDP's prototype signature SG, played through a Marshall JTM45 combo. The overdubs were accomplished using another Gibson, an ES-355, through an Audio Kitchen Little Chopper boutique mini-stack. 'That amp is pretty prominent in a number of songs – it's the second guitar on *Slideway*, but you really hear it on *Hard To Love You*. It's a bit like a hornpipe, played by a guitar.' Other six-string contributions were made via a Two-Rock Signature Jet and a Mallard, a split amp modelled on a Vox AC15 on one side and an 18W Marshall on the other, chopping and changing depending on the song.

Stephen is an effects junkie, and the Zvex Fuzz Probe caused some amusement during the tracking sessions in Nashville. 'It has a copper plate on it so you can do theremin effects,' he explains. 'I didn't end up doing that, but the cool thing is that at the end of *Slideway*, the second song we recorded, there's radio coming through my guitar because of that copper plate acting as a conductor – and it's Tennessee Ernie

Mick Taylor on SDP

Rolling Stone Mick Taylor, who appears on *Cracking The Code*, gives *Guitar & Bass* his exclusive thoughts on the Stephen Dale Petit phenomenon...

'I see Stephen as a friend first and foremost, and a really good guitar player. I've been friends with him since 2009, when I played with him a couple of times; I did a short English tour with his band to promote *The Crave*. I've also played with him at the 100 Club with Ronnie Wood in 2010 – or 2011, I can't remember!

'He's got his own unique take on contemporary blues, which is interesting because some people do the reverse. They're more traditional, more retrospective, they do covers of Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf and the classic blues artists. Stephen does that too; I've heard him do a great live version of Freddie King's *Have You Ever Loved A Woman*, which Eric Clapton covered. He showed me a great clip on YouTube where he was just singing and playing guitar with a backup band in an arena in Germany – it was wonderful.

'Stephen produces his own albums and they're all different, all interesting. I hope he gets the opportunity to do more shows and take a band on the road in places like Scandinavia and Holland, because he deserves the recognition. I know people in those countries, as well as England, would appreciate what he's trying to do.

'Interestingly, I went to see Bill Wyman's Rhythm Kings at the Barbican a few weeks ago. I'd just got back from America, where I'd done some shows with Ronnie Wood. I went backstage to meet Bill and the rest of the band, and there were a few guitar fanatics there. One or two of them said "We really enjoyed your playing on the Stephen Dale Petit album." It was nice to be paid compliments for something other than what I did with the Stones, which I get all the time. Something less well known, but just as important.'

Photo: Al Stewart

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Mick Taylor, Ronnie Wood, Petit and Chris Barber at the 100 Club in London, 2010

Photo: Paul Stewart

Ford doing *Sixteen Tons*! I'd grown up in America but I hadn't recorded there properly, and it was my first time in Tennessee. The very first FM broadcast in the US happened in Nashville, so it was a nice little road sign.'

Cream lyricist Pete Brown, who co-wrote the title track on *The Crave,* contributed to this album's *Shotgun Venus*. The concept was that, as JJ Cale 'stole' the riff for *Cocaine* from *Sunshine Of Your Love,* they would steal it back. 'Pete thought it was a great idea! I live literally 100 metres away from where *Sunshine*... was written, so it all made sense in some synchronistic way.'

Presenting the blues in a different way is something Stephen constantly strives to do. 'Somebody listening to *Slideway* said about halfway through, "Are my speakers damaged? Is it meant to sound like that?" I was so happy because I did want it to sound like that... shards of sound and untidiness in the distortion. I didn't want it to be polished. When the Stones' *Satisfaction* was first heard, it was completely extraordinary. There was never anything like it before. I am striving to get there, and in some instances I think we achieved it – with *Muzzle* and *Slideway,* certainly.'

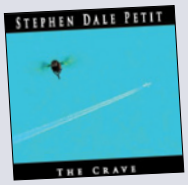
Petit's trajectory to this point has been nothing if not unconventional. A search of the net or, indeed, back issues of this very magazine (which he acknowledges as an early supporter) will unearth tales of early career crisis, wild living and a period busking in an attempt to both rehabilitate himself musically and keep a roof over his head. These are well-documented topics, as are friendships with the likes of Clapton, Wood, Gilmour and Taylor, but he's keen to move on.

'Busking wasn't an attempt to be unconventional,' he protests, 'it was a way of saving my ass! But that was over 10 years ago. There'll be a lot of live work this year, touring and festivals. I'll be going out under my own name, but we might support someone who's hugely established and is selling hundreds of thousands as we speak. We'll be playing some venues as headliners – we've made the album, so we'll tour the fuck out of it!'

At the end of the day Stephen Dale Petit's mission is to keep the blues alive in a non-reverential way. 'The comment I love the most is when people say: "I never really liked blues, but after hearing this I'm really excited. What was I thinking all these years?"'

Listen up

STEPHEN DALE PETIT
The Crave
(2010)
His second album saw Petit make strides in both the vocal and songwriting departments from debut *Guitararama* of two years earlier, while keeping up the stunning riff quotient. A must-have



STEPHEN DALE PETIT
At High Voltage
(2012)
His band this night included the Pretty Things' Dick Taylor, who hadn't played bass since he was with the Stones, a teenage drummer, and a harmonica player. The result? A classic!

STEPHEN DALE PETIT
Cracking The Code
(2013)
A real rarity – a star-studded effort that doesn't collapse under the weight of famous names appearing on it. Could this be another Jack White at work?

And another thing...

Eric Clapton caught Stephen busking in London's Charing Cross Road many years ago, where he was drawing crowds ten deep outside the now-demolished Astoria theatre

Sumlin Special

The late great Howlin' Wolf guitarist, who died in late 2011, plays on two tracks – his last recorded performances – and inspired a third. Here's how the songs came about...

Get You Off

'I knew Hubert would be on *Get You Off*, it was a real elegant fit. We were at Barber Shop Studios in New Jersey. I sat him down and I got that guitar, the SG, because it's a beautiful thing, everything made to my spec. I salivated over Gibson catalogues as a 12 year-old, so it was a dream come true. I placed the guitar in his hands and he instantly changed. He became really animated. At first he was playing it and said, "Why do you want me to sign this?" I said, "I don't – I want you to play it!" Half an hour later he said, "It's mine, it's going home with me!" It was the last guitar he ever played.

Hubert's Blues

I thought I'd be missing an opportunity if I was in a studio and didn't try and start something from scratch with him. *Hubert's Blues* was just the scaffolding of the song... all the changes were there, but it didn't have a name. We were doing that and he called for food, got too tired and went home. I laid down the rhythm, played over the top through his amp and incorporated some of the stuff he'd done. I felt a real sense of responsibility... for his last outing, I had to do him proud. He had to shine. If Hubert had listened back to it he would have had been made up about it. This track became a tribute; Mac [Rebennack, aka Dr John] was interested, I knew Mick [Taylor] would play. I said we could make it our own little send-off – which is why I got [jazz trombonist] Chris Barber, who is just perfect.

Holler

'*Holler* came to be because I thought there must be something usable, even if it's just for three bars, so I spent half a day with the engineer. Everything in the song is in the key of F, and it was I-IV-V and a couple of other changes. I sequenced it all and spent half a day listening. I put all the ones in F at the top, and A# in the next row and all the riffs that worked in C... there were 50 of them, or something. I told the engineer to press play and after the first three I said, "Stop – this is the song." And that's what you're hearing on *Holler*. On the left-hand speaker, that's Hubert.'

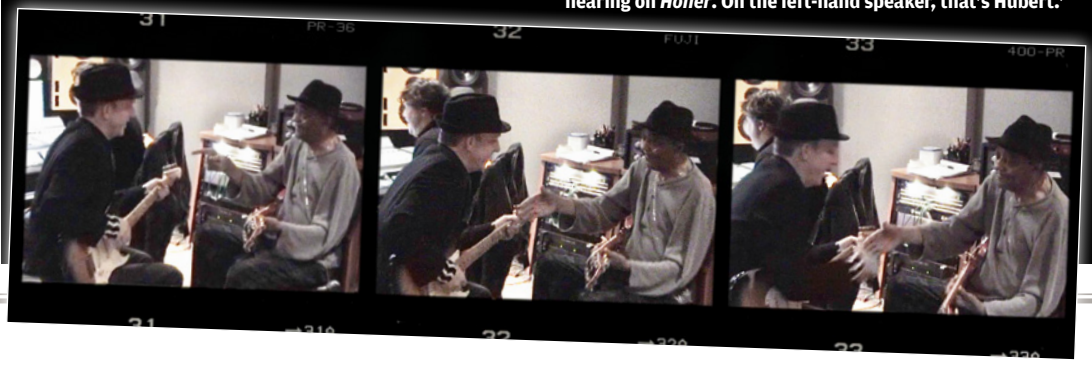


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Photo: Mike Prior

Wave Power

Combining a defiantly English outlook with a New York sense of liberation, the Wave Pictures and guitarist David Tattersall are demonstrating that indie can thrill again. Interview by **Steve Bailey**

Gear

Guitars
1990s Gibson SG, '90s Yamaha Pacifica 112, Squier Classic Vibe Telecaster, '60s Martin dreadnought, Hohner Gruhn-designed acoustic

Amps
Fender Blues Junior

Effects
None

When a barrage of impassioned guitar comes at you from an unexpected source it can feel like you've left the designated path and stumbled over a secluded well of musical joy. The Wave Pictures' latest album *City Forgiveness* is a case in point, offering such a huge palette of abrasive, vampy fretwork that it sends your guitar-calibrated endorphins positively berserk. You need only wait 90 seconds for the first infectious, free-form six-string foray, and that's something virtually unheard of from a band of this ilk. Exploratory and chaotic, this kind of lead guitar playing can create moments of exquisite invention.

The independent music scene – where long, cascading guitar breaks are often frowned upon, or in some quarters even vilified – hasn't offered up many instrumental heroes over the years, so when a player does negotiate that particular minefield it usually means they have something quite special in the locker. Television's Tom Verlaine may have earned to right to let loose on his Jazzmaster, Yo La Tengo's Ira Kaplin's inspired adventures in fuzz are legendary, while J Mascis' mastery of Big Muff-infused riffage has steamrollered all protestations – but these are exceptions to the rule. The Wave Pictures certainly are an indie band with lyrical and musical sensibilities to match; there's no hard-rock histrionics from this three-piece, and the traditional power-trio cap doesn't fit. Yet this a guitar-led record, albeit a left-field one, and that is what makes it so captivating.

Without a guitar in his hands the Wave Pictures' frontman David Tattersall is not an individual who immediately strikes you as the archetypal frontman. Indeed, he isn't – but don't be fooled, for his love of the guitar is passionate and deep-rooted, and he's battled the naysayers for the right to put inspired musicality at the heart of some beautiful and lyrically rich compositions.

Growing up in Leicestershire, Tattersall studied fingerstyle blues and folk players from as young as six or seven years old. By the time he reached his eleventh year his progress impressed enough that he was invited to play short sets in local folk clubs.

'The first time I ever played in public was when I went on in the interval of a Martin Carthy show,' he recalls. 'It was just 50 people in a room above a local pub called Cotes Mill. I never sang... my voice hadn't broken and I couldn't hold a tune. I did three instrumental tunes. I was doing Reverend Gary Davis stuff, John Fahey things, Mississippi John Hurt, fingerpicking stuff like that. My real electric guitar hero as a kid, though, was Rory Gallagher. I had a video of him on *The Old Grey Whistle Test* and I used to watch it over and over.'

'My first time in public was at a Martin Carthy show, but Rory Gallagher was my hero'

The pivotal moment came when he discovered the likes of Jonathan Richmond and the well of alternative acts that inhabited a whole new ↦

The Wave Pictures: Jonny Helm (drums), Franic Rozycki (bass) and David Tattersall

musical territory, and the seed that eventually became The Wave Pictures was planted. 'I think in terms of guitar before anything else, so there were certain people I had to hear or I never would have thought of becoming a singer,' Tattersall explains. 'I never wanted to put on an American accent, wear leather trousers or look like a rock star... it was just unfeasible!

'It was the Violent Femmes and the Velvet Underground, those kind of bands that made me want to write songs. That's the type of music that speaks to me the most, I suppose, and sometimes you need something to make you feel like you could do it too, but I always felt like I was a sort of split personality because I loved the guitar and guitar players as well. I thought if Rory Gallagher had been in the Violent Femmes, how great would that be? And that's sort of the Wave Pictures to me.'

'There's a lot of hostility towards the guitar solos. I get accused of showing off'

Tom Verlaine's guitar playing with Television showed the way, and the New York iconoclast soon became a big influence. 'He's very rare in indie music. He has a clean sound and he's a little jazzy, maybe, and a little bit more exploratory, which I think makes him a very unique figure. Some Neil Young is a little like that. *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere*, or *Zuma* – those are some of my very favourite records, and he's a fantastic guitar player. It just shows it's not totally unprecedented, but it does seem to confuse people!'

It may have seemed obvious to the young Tattersall to put his guitar heroes' moves together with his love of alternative songwriters, but the degree of resistance he's met has been an eye-opener. 'There's always been a lot of hostility towards the guitar solos. I get accused of being self-indulgent, or of showing off,' he bristles. 'I think, "How is that more self-indulgent than singing a song I've written about myself? Okay, I'll stop being self-indulgent and get back to singing my song about my ex-girlfriend!" It's just another way to express yourself and bring out the emotions of the song.

'To just say you hate guitar solos on principle makes no sense. It's like there's all these sort of divisions that exist almost for some kind of marketing purpose, and it feels that if you do anything that breaks with that some people get very uncomfortable or confused. It's been one of the more difficult things in an otherwise totally enjoyable life of making music.'

Tattersall's Gibson SG is pretty much his first, last and only choice as far as live shows go. He found it when his parents offered to buy him a new guitar for his eighteenth birthday some 12 years ago. 'I thought I was going to be a Fender guy, because Rory Gallagher played a Strat and Tom Verlaine plays a Jazzmaster. I went to the shop and I played them all, but I didn't like any of them.

'No part of me thought I would like an SG. No-one I admired particularly played one, I didn't like the way it looked especially, but I picked up this particular guitar and I just loved it. When I go into shops I'll try the other SGs, but I've never played another that's the same. It's just a '90s SG Standard. That particular one that came out of the factory that day, by some quirk, was just right.

'With a three-piece band the SG can fill the space. You can do the rocking thing, but then it also has a very jazzy middle tone. I switch between the pickups constantly during songs and even during solos. I use the neck pickup more than the bridge pickup – definitely for solos, weirdly. It has a great range of sounds between those two pickups, and it's very easy to play.'

After auditioning various Fenders from the top of the range downwards, Tattersall did finally find a Squier Classic Vibe Tele that impressed him a few years back. 'I sat in the shop in Denmark Street and I played all the Telecasters, right up to about a £2,000 one of some description. I bought the Squier because I genuinely liked the neck better than any of the others. It was like a £200 guitar, the cheapest one. I put some Seymour Duncan pickups in and now it's a killer Telecaster. I wrote a lot of songs on it and I used it entirely for the album before this one, *Long Black Cars*. But it's not a good touring guitar for a three-piece. On the rhythm it sounds great – percussive and harsh – but it's got no body to the sound.'

A Les Paul Black Beauty was added too, but it quickly fell out of favour. 'It sounded great in the shop, but day-in, day-out it didn't have what I want. It was a little too heavy and a little noisy. If I could take it back, I would! As with the Tele, it was great for a new bunch of songs. You could buy a new guitar once a year just to feel inspired and get a new bunch of songs out of it.'

And another thing...

David Tattersall's guitar skills have appeared on albums from other acts including Herman Dune, Darren Hayman and Stanley Brinks. It's something he enjoys enormously: 'I love doing it, it's fun to just be the guitarist and play lead for people. I'd love to get asked more often – you can put that in your magazine!'

GUITARS

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Listen up

THE WAVE PICTURES
City Forgiveness
(2013)
The eleventh album if you count the early self-released efforts, but this is the one where Tattersall's guitar really shines. Recorded in just three days, it captures the excitement of a band transcending all expectations

DAVID TATTERSALL
Little Martha
(2012)
Tattersall revisits his formative acoustic fingerstyle years with a sparsely recorded, entirely instrumental album that gives a nod to John Fahey, Reverend Gary Davis and Leo Kottke

STANLEY BRINKS & THE WAVE PICTURES
Gin
(2014)
This March release sees Dave and band backing Brinks for the third time. Put to tape live in the studio, the band hadn't heard the songs before the day of the session but they soundtrack this typically gorgeous selection effortlessly

A £200 solid-wood Yamaha Pacifica 112 is his only other real keeper, which, like the SG, was also Christmas present from his parents. This one has been with him since he was around 12, and it still earns its keep. 'I still record with it often because it's got the whammy bar,' Tattersall says. 'It's on the new album, but I'd say almost all of the songs are the SG. They're still the only two guitars I need. There is one song which uses the Telecaster, called *Narrow Lane*.'

Unlike most of his alternative rock guitar contemporaries, Tattersall eschews all effects. 'I've never owned a pedal,' he confirms. 'The sound I like is just the guitar plugged into an amp. All those blues guys like John Lee Hooker didn't use any effects and they sound amazing. I always found so many different sounds that I liked in the amp or just with the guitar.'

It was only a couple of years ago Tattersall bought his very first valve amp, having been content with cheap cast-off tranny amps in the past. 'I was never that obsessed with amps but I tried out the Fender Blues Junior and really loved it. I think that amp has made a big difference. It's just got a very clean, warm, full sound with a lot of mid tone. I put the middle on 9, the treble on 1 and the bass on 4 or 5, but with the bridge pickup it still sounds quite trebly. It's not like a classic rock Gibson/Marshall sound, which I never liked. I always want to hear all the strings from the right hand, which I guess comes from starting out fingerpicking on acoustic.'

His clean tone reveals just how proficient Tattersall really is, especially when he lets loose on one of his audacious solos. 'We made an effort to make an album that's more like what we're like live, and to have slightly more space for longer guitar parts – whole sections of it!' he laughs. 'The solos are always totally improvised, though occasionally there's a little theme or something which I might repeat live.

'It's funny, solos get worse the more takes you do... they're best when they're very spontaneous. Everything else gets better, the bass and the drums, the vocal... but the best guitar solo is always take one. The first one, you're just flying.'

City Forgiveness was recorded on tape in traditional analogue fashion at Soup Studios in East London, and despite resolving to take their time over this album, it was all recorded in just a few days – all 20 songs of what became a double album.

'We didn't decide to make a double album but I just wrote a lot of songs all in a couple of weeks, and that's never happened to me before. It was like bang, bang, bang. I wrote 20 or 30 songs, we recorded them and kept 20. That's the album. It was like, "Let's just go in and see what happens, try things out and do as many days as we need." And we still just took three days for a double album! It was all very quick and spontaneous. You more or less have to overdub backing vocals, but I think everything else is live. Even if someone was shaking a shaker, they were in the room shaking it.'

Friends also turned out to assist. Many songs have two drummers; Paul Rains from Allo Darlin' contributes some rhythm guitar, while Stanley Brinks – now a solo artist but formerly of Herman Dune – plays some guitar, saxophone and 'other bits and bobs'.

David's essentials, a Yamaha Pacifica and a Gibson SG Standard

'We tried to capture the room sound, so you can sort of picture where the people are when you listen to it. To get a live performance – that's exciting. We all feel it's by far the best thing we've ever done. It feels as if this is our first album. I think it sounds a lot better than anything we've done before... and that's all down Soup Studio and the engineers.'

> *'The solos are all improvised, and the best is always take one. The first one, you're flying'*

The core of the Wave Pictures is a three-piece made up of David, Franic Rozycki on bass and Jonny Helm on drums. They've averaged over an album a year since their inception in 2003 and have found time for a whole host of EPs and other projects with their colourful array of friends.

The band's enviable work ethic involves operating on a very small scale – there's minimal record company input, and foreign tours are often booked by friends abroad. It's a model that allows them to make exactly the music they want, when they want – and, David insists, it allows a decent wage too.

'Right from the start, no gig was too small. We've just gone everywhere that we could. We've done things in a DIY sort of way, but it's been great for us. It's a small band. We don't have a sound man, we don't have agents, we carry our own stuff, no driver, no tour manager, just the three of us in a van looking at the map and figuring out where we're going the next day.

'It really is possible to be that small and make a good living. We're quite well-known in a small world, so you can go and do that sort of touring. We've got a good distribution deal in Germany for this album, but even if we didn't then we could go and do a tour as a bar-band and play our own songs... which was all I ever wanted to do. I love the simplicity of it. We really love playing live, and we make it work.'

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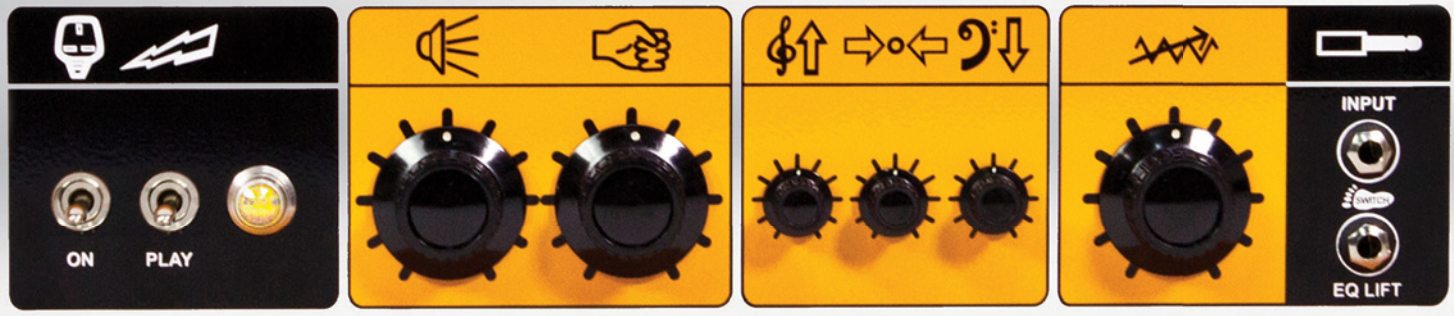

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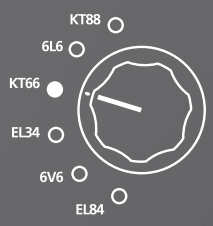

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SCHECTER
Banshee 6 FR Active

If you want to slay the front row with killer riffs, Schecter knows how to deliver serious metal ordnance at a great price. Review by **Marcus Leadley**

Introduced at NAMM in 2013, the active Banshee 6 FR and its passive sibling represent Schecter's current take on the quintessential modern metal guitar. The 6 FR Passive (strange name for a metal guitar!) has Seymour Duncan pickups – a JB/bridge and 59/neck combination – with a coil tap, so you can get both humbucker and single coil tones: that's a 10/10 for flexibility. The active version we have on test, though, is fitted with EMG pickups, an 81 at the neck and an 85 at the bridge, routed via a three-way selector to master tone and volume controls. So, on the face of it, the active version offers fewer tonal options. What's the advantage of going active, then? More on this in a minute.

Out of the box the Banshee 6 FR is a well-presented beast. We're loving the crimson-red burst on the flame maple veneer that sits on top of the alder drop-top body, and the faux-binding effect created by leaving the body's top edge free from stain is a pleasing visual touch. This is a relatively light guitar so it's a guaranteed comfortable all-day player, and the deep ribcage chamfer means it fits like a glove.

The basic unplugged sound is bright and snappy and the Banshee is ridiculously easy to play in every position up and down the neck. This is actually the first Schecter to have a compound radius fingerboard, which partly explains the superb feel. The 12" radius area from the nut to around fret 15 is ideal for chord playing. The neck flattens out to a 16" radius after

The maple/walnut neck is bolted to the alder body via a contoured heel

Black chrome Grover Rotomatic machineheads with a 18:1 ratio

This is the first ever Schecter with a compound radius fingerboard; it feels superb and is ridiculously easy to play

this, which suits string bending and expressive lead work. The fingerboard is ebony and, in another nice touch, it's framed by maple binding. This means that the tangs of the jumbo frets are well out of sight, and the edges feel super-smooth and comfortable.

The neck itself is made from a five-piece maple/walnut laminate, so it should be strong and stable. It's a bolt-on type, and while access up to the 24th fret is good, we have seen set and through-neck models where it's better.

Both ends of the string path are defined by quality hardware. The tuners are by Grover, and the bridge is a genuine Floyd Rose 1000 Series unit. With the guitar properly set up and the strings locked down tight at the nut, tuning stability is exceptional, even when you start divebombing. This shouldn't be a surprise as the technology's been with us since the mid-'70s and widely available for around 20 years, but it still gets me every time.

Sounds

So what's the advantage of the active pickups? The additional circuitry is essentially a preamp, so the instrument's flexibility lies in the provision of a pristine high-output ➔

FACTFILE
SCHECTER BANSHEE 6 FR

DESCRIPTION
Solidbody electric guitar. Made in South Korea
PRICE **£699**

BUILD **Alder body with flame maple veneer top, bolt-on neck made from five-piece maple/walnut laminate. Ebony 12"-16" compound radius fingerboard with 24 jumbo frets. All hardware in black chrome, including Floyd Rose 1000 series vibrato, Grover Rotomatic 18:1 tuners and a locking nut**
ELECTRICS **EMG active humbuckers with ceramic magnets and close-aperture coils: 81 bridge/85 neck, plus three-position toggle switch, master tone and volume controls**
LEFT-HANDERS **Yes, for an additional £80**
FINISH **See-through black, crimson red burst**

SCALE LENGTH
647mm/25.5"
NECK WIDTH
Nut 42mm
12th fret 52.3mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 19.5mm
12th fret 20mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 35mm
Bridge 52.7mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 1.8mm
12th fret bass 2mm
WEIGHT **3.53kg/7.75lbs**

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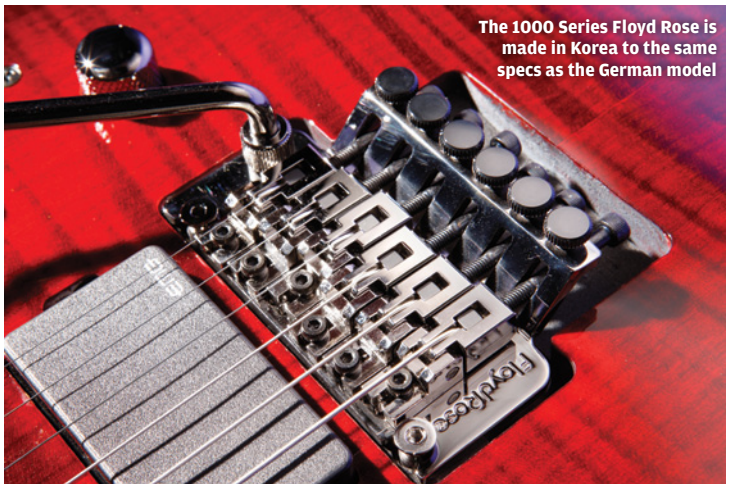
ESP
MII
Another close contender with an alder body with flame maple top and a bolt-on 24 fret maple neck, plus a rosewood fingerboard, EMG pickups and a Floyd Rose vibrato
RRP **£1799**

Charvel
Desolation DX-1FR
Two octave neck, licensed Floyd Rose and the 81/85 EMGs, but this time with through-neck construction and a mahogany body
RRP **£764**


The 1000 Series Floyd Rose is made in Korea to the same specs as the German model

Beyond the urge to emulate your heroes, the EMGs give plenty of room to claim your own sonic real estate

signal to your amps and effects. Active pickups are the business if you want to fine-tune your sound for playing crunch chords and super-distorted solos that retain clarity and punch. They offer a smooth, compressed full-spectrum tonal continuity and, correctly voiced, they can accentuate pick-edge attack to great effect. Active humbuckers are also generally very good studio pickups as they are very low-noise. Clean sustain is another area where they excel, so melodic prog or jazz-inspired playing can really hit some sweet spots. On the downside, active pickups tend to whitewash the nuances of the individual instrument's sound, and a guitar with EMGs tends to sound like... well, a guitar with EMGs; for the player, it's a bit of a Marmite thing. Oh, and you have to remember to check and replace that 9V battery from time to time.

For a guitar that's designed to rock, this Banshee is more than happy to deliver fine clean tones. The neck pickup setting is best for this; the rich, warm sound is excellent for chords behind a voice, song intros and ballad style break-downs. The bridge pickup sound has more forward mids and this, surprisingly, makes it feel a little more 'vintage'. It's good for damped chords or doubling a distorted part when you want to add a harmonic undercurrent or greater girth. Not surprisingly, the twin pickup sound is a kind of halfway house between the two extremes – kind of hi-fi honky, if you like. The Banshee's clean bass tone, right across all three selector settings, is especially pleasing; snappy and piano-like.

However, it's when you start to ramp up the gain that the Banshee starts to deliver. Players with old-school tastes will appreciate the way you can still sculpt authentic-sounding tones with these pickups. Roll out the Marshall for post-'72 Page and the Laney for vintage Iommi, or there's plenty of punk attitude too if you want it.

One thing that becomes clear is that while, yes, there is definitely an EMG signature tone, it's a very flexible starting point, and your choice of amp and effects will deliver radically different outcomes, while working with the gain and tone controls will take you to most of the places you'll want to go. With the right backline the Banshee will also deliver a good approximation of the guitar sound of any EMG endorsee, so if you want to dive headlong into a Zakk Wylde solo or jam along with your favourite Slayer, Metallica or Megadeth tunes, you'll be onto a winner.

Beyond the urge to emulate your heroes, there's still plenty of room to stake your own claim to some prime sonic real estate. While everyone would, in an ideal world, have a monstrous head and cab and play loud all the time, for those of us with lesser means and intolerant neighbours the secret of getting the best out of a modelling amp or software is largely about the signal you load in at the front end. The Banshee is ideal for lower volume playing and the home recordist. It sounds fantastic with a Kemper or an Avid 11 Rack, and it even made an old Line 6 Spider very happy. It's also a great starting point for effected sounds and, once again, the hi-fi output really makes new kit sing. And it's worth exploring the unloved effects sitting on the dusty shelf, as some surprising new potentials may emerge.

Headstock overlay matches the body's maple cap

The ebony fingerboard has 24 jumbo frets and small offset dot markers

Verdict

Active EMGs have been around for a long time now, and there's a really extensive list of users; it's easy to see why when you can get killer sounds with surprisingly little effort. The Banshee 6 FR is a great-playing guitar with a really professional feel, and it's loads of fun. With an instrument of this style the quality of hardware is everything, and anyone with an older generation budget rock guitar will find it a complete revelation. The price is a fair one for a pro-spec instrument of this type, and even at full price it comes in a fair bit cheaper than a number of close competitors, but if you find a deal that shaves £100 off then that will increase the feelgood factor even more.

FINAL SCORE

SCHECTER BANSHEE 6 FR	
Build Quality	**17**/20
Playability	**18**/20
Sound	**18**/20
Value for money	**18**/20
Vibe	**18**/20
TOTAL	**89%**

From the light, singing overdrive of classic rock to raunchy, screaming, ear-shattering distortion, the **Dirty Deed** was created for complete versatility. The tone is very organic and natural sounding; it's designed to capture the character and responsiveness of a classic overdriven tube amplifier with elements of distortion, fuzz and overdrive combined into a single wide-range pedal. With a turn of the gain knob you can go from the sparkling overdrive of your favorite classic rock songs to a rich, powerful hard rock distortion with amp-like saturation. The distortion is thick and beefy with a sweet spot in the mid-range EQ and a strong bass response, while highly responsive Treble, Bass, Gain and Level controls allow you to dial in your ideal sound whether you're using the **Dirty Deed** as your sole source of grit or you're adding some extra dirt to an already-overdriven amp.

For maximum flexibility the **Dirty Deed** incorporates an active EQ for 12dB of treble and bass boost/cut. A pair of MOSFET transistors evoke the tube-like harmonics and lush sustain that only come from dangerously pushed amplifiers. Runs on standard 9v to 18v DC power supplies. At 18v the Dirty Deed enhances overall saturation and compression.

After several years of development, this analogue, 100% true bypass distortion pedal is now being released to the public. Designed and assembled in Santa Barbara, California.

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FRET-KING
Black Label Esprit I

Handsome, quirky and most certainly rock-ready, the affordable Esprit I comes with more sounds hidden away in its single pickup than you might think. Review by **Marcus Leadley**

As a guitar designer, Trevor Wilkinson is a force to be reckoned with. Whether you want a new take on a familiar American classic, vintage Italian pearloid styling or a modern rock monster, there should be at least one instrument on your radar that he has designed. He has an uncanny knack of delivering the best value for money you can squeeze from a guitar in any price range, and as well as guitars he's designed hardware and pickups both for the production line and for aftermarket modifications. Fret-King is his own baby, so these guitars reflect exactly what he believes 'good' guitars should be. He's inclined to riff on traditional electric guitar shapes, but always manages to twist the form so that the instrument is clearly a Fret-King – and he will usually modify the electrics to offer tonal combinations you can't find elsewhere. Overall pricing is dependent on the origin of the range, with the Black and Blue Label guitars being made entirely in Korea, while Green Label and Studio Series instruments are assembled, fretted, finished and set up in the UK, using parts from Korea and Japan.

This Black Label Esprit is quite a statement, a take on the extrovert Gibson Firebird I theme with an agathis body finished in metallic gun hill blue. It's a colour that's not a million miles away from the classic Fender Lake Placid blue metallic, except that this paint has a real glitter sparkle to it. Armed with a serrated, reverse headstock, it's a real head-turner. There's a definite degree of method in the madness, though, as the Esprit is surprisingly comfortable to wear on a strap, and the extended sweep of the upper rear bout coincides exactly with the angle of your arm so you can lean on it in just the same way you can lean comfortably on the door of a well-designed car while you're driving. It's a nicely balanced guitar to wear, but perhaps a ribcage chamfer would make the fit that little bit better.

The maple set neck is on the chunky side and the rosewood fingerboard is buffed to a high shine. The medium jumbo frets are well-finished but the fingerboard isn't bound so you can just feel the tangs along the edge – but none of them stands uncomfortably proud. Access all the way up to the 22nd fret is very good indeed. The 25" scale ➔

Maple neck set into an agathis body

Wilkinson machineheads with metal keystone buttons

The Black Label Esprit I is a take on the Firebird I with a serrated reverse headstock, and it's a real head-turner

FACTFILE
FRET-KING ESPRIT 1

DESCRIPTION **Solidbody electric guitar. Made in Korea**
PRICE **£519 inc. gigbag**

BUILD **Agathis body, maple set neck with 22-fret rosewood fingerboard, no body or neck binding. Chrome Wilkinson WJ04 tuners, GTB adjustable wraparound bridge**
ELECTRICS **Single stacked Fret-King WP90SK pickup, volume, master tone and Vari-coil controls**
LEFT-HANDERS **No**
FINISH **Gun hill blue, vintage white**

SCALE LENGTH **634mm/25"**
NECK WIDTH **Nut 44mm**
12th fret 53.2mm
DEPTH OF NECK **First fret 21.8mm**
Ninth fret 24.5mm
STRING SPACING **Nut 35.2mm**
Bridge 51.4mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED **12th fret treble 1.8mm**
12th fret bass 2mm
WEIGHT **3.27kg/7.2lbs**

CONTACT **JHS**
01132 865 381
www.fret-king.com

Like this? Try this...

Fret-King
Green Label Esprit 1
If you love the style and have a little more money burning a hole in your pocket, this model has a korina body with mahogany set neck, tunomatic bridge and single P90
RRP **£1239**

Gordon-Smith
SG1
Another Gibson-inspired classic with a single P90, a set maple neck option and wrapover bridge
RRP **£546**

Eastwood
Stormbird
If you fancy P90 tone and just one won't do, how about a pair? Set neck, non-reverse Firebird styling for a not too dissimilar look at a nice price
RRP **£349**

length is a halfway house between Fender and Gibson scales, and it's a good alternative. You can snap and twang the strings to good, percussive effect or dig in deep down past the 12th fret for seriously controlled wailing.

Acoustically this guitar is loud and you can really feel the body resonate; the wraparound-style Wilkinson GTB bridge does a great job of facilitating the transmission of energy from the strings. The unit is a good example of Wilkinson's ability to modify a classic design, as the section below the G and B strings can be unscrewed to adjust the guitar's intonation if necessary.

The electrics look deceptively simple but Wilkinson manages to drag maximum flexibility out of just one pickup. The WP90SK is a stacked P90, and as well as master tone and volume controls there's a Vari-coil rotary which lets you dial the second coil in and out. In effect you can morph, by degrees, from a single coil to a humbucking tone – bearing in mind that a stacked single coil doesn't sound exactly like a standard humbucker.

Master volume, master tone and the all-important Wilkinson Vari-coil knob

The Vari-coil allows you to create blended tones, adding or subtracting presence for clean chords or melodies

Sounds

Getting used to the tone/Vari-coil arrangement takes a little time because, whatever the current is doing, the tonal effect is such that one appears to operate clockwise, while the other works anti-clockwise. In other words, to get maximum treble output you need the tone set to 10 and the Vari-coil to zero, taking the second coil right out of the picture. This is the guitar's basic single coil mode, and set like this the Esprit delivers a biting yet rich clean sound that's great for jangly chords and all manner of fingerpicking. It's a tone that loves a bit of chorus, a flanger or a large reverb.

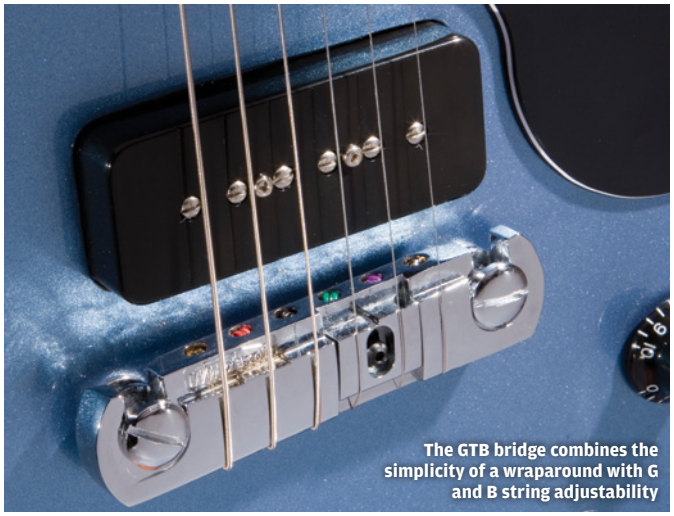
Winding in the Vari-coil subtly thickens up the sound, filling out the mids and rounding the top end, but without changing the fundamental sound of the instrument. Going a little further takes you to a smoother tone that's good for a mellow jazz sound, and then you can roll a little more of the top end out via the tone control for vintage chord comping.

Bringing the Vari-coil fully in and opening up the tone gives you the Esprit's humbucking sound. This might need a little brightening at the amp end, and it's a fairly generic humbucker-style bridge tone with forward, slightly boxy mids. This characteristic suits driven voices well, but generally I don't find the clean option that useful. However, the Vari-coil allows you to create blended tones that are genuinely practical, adding or subtracting a degree of presence for clean chords or melodies.

With a little more gain the Esprit starts to develop proper rock credentials. It's great for crunchy chords and bluesy leads and surf madness from the Dick Dale camp, and you can add a little more gain to head into glam, boogie and punk territory. As the pickup is designed along the lines of a vintage P90, its output is not incredibly high; this is a good thing in terms of tone and articulation, but you won't get that modern metal thud or quite the right brogue for shredding. However, it excels at classic metal and rock, delivering a whole range of tones that suit the P90-loaded Lester and SG repertoire. Again, the Vari-coil is very useful, and it can be used musically while playing to finesse the shape of your sound.

Verdict

This is a very likeable, playable guitar with a surprising range of sounds. The style is a statement, but if it's not quite for you there are many alternatives spread across the Fret-King range with similar capabilities – or if one P90 seems a little limited then there are Esprit versions with three P90s, standard humbuckers and Fender-style single coils to choose from. Above all, however, this guitar has a real Fret-King signature sound and you won't get quite the same thing from another brand. It's a rock monster with a taste for surf and twang, it records very well, and it offers the sort of sonic definition you need to stand out in a loud live band.


The GTB bridge combines the simplicity of a wraparound with G and B string adjustability

FINAL SCORE

FRET-KING ESPRIT 1	
Build Quality	**18**/20
Playability	**18**/20
Sound	**17**/20
Value for money	**18**/20
Vibe	**17**/20
TOTAL	**88%**

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BUDDA

BUDDA
Series II Superdrive V20

If you're looking for a chunky, compact rock amp that you can tweak for tone and then switch for drive levels, then the lower-power amp in the Budda Superdrive series might suit. Review by **Huw Price**

If you thought that Budda amps tended towards being just a touch too, well... purple, then you'll find the look of the new MkII combo with its more subtle cream fascia to be a huge improvement. It looks good: modern, stylish and distinctive. Triangular Davis knobs are a nice touch, and the off-white tolex is (almost) an exact match for the control panel. The finish quality impresses, and heavy duty bolts fix the thick back panels to the open-back cabinet. Structurally speaking the V20 is overbuilt and somewhat weighty, but it's reassuringly solid and nothing rattles or buzzes.

A 5U4 valve handles rectification duties with two channels feeding a trio of 12AX7 preamp tubes and a pair of 6V6 valves for 20W of Class AB power. Individual preamp volume controls, labelled Drive and Rhythm, line up alongside shared Master, Bass, Middle and Treble. The master volume doubles up as a channel switcher and push/pulls on the Mid and Rhythm controls provide mid boost and bright switching.

The V20's back panel features include output impedance switching, an FX loop and a Slave output with a level control. We also appreciated the heavy duty cable with a gold-plated right-angle jack that hooks up the Budda-designed Phat 12 speaker.

An aluminium chassis – along with a pine cabinet – helps keep the weight down

The V20 gives the same basic tone on both channels but with the potential for vastly different levels of gain

Sounds

Rather than go for two distinctly voiced channels, the Budda V20 is more about giving players the same basic tone on both channels but with the potential for two vastly different levels of gain. To some extent this tonal similarity is predictable given the shared EQ section, and sometimes there can be a degree of compromise with amps that are configured this way.

The pull bright switch on the rhythm channel is a very clever feature, but this may not be immediately apparent. If you start by dialling in your clean tone with the bright switch disengaged then switch it in, the chances are you'll find that things get too bright – at which point, you may begin to wonder what it's doing there in the first place.

Things begin to make sense when you switch channels and dial in your overdrive sound. Extra harmonic ➔

FACTFILE

BUDDA SERIES II SUPERDRIVE V20

DESCRIPTION **Twin channel 20W valve combo with one 12" Budda Phat 12 speaker, 2 x 6V6 power valves, 5U4 rectifier, 3 x 12AX7s, handwired power section with PCB preamp construction, effects loop, slave out, extension speaker out, 4/8/16 Ohm switching. Made in the USA**
PRICE **£1699**

CONTROLS **Drive, Rhythm, Master, Bass, Middle and Treble with push/pull switches for channel selection, mid boost and bright (Rhythm channel only)**
DIMENSIONS **55cm high, 59cm wide, 27cm deep**
WEIGHT **20.37kg/44.91lbs**

CONTACT **Chandler Guitars**
020 8940 5874
www.budda.com

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Two Rock
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A beefy 22W 2x6V6 1x12" combo with a Pull Bright control, active buffered FX loop, spring reverb with Send and Return controls, and a 'pickup loading' control with five settings
RRP **£1749**

Fender
Super-Sonic 22
With the option of black or blonde tolex for a more retro look, Fender's 22W 2x6V6 combo comes with a 1x12" Eminence Lightning Bolt and two channels – Vintage and Burn – plus spring reverb
RRP **£954**

Mesa Boogie
Rectifier Rect-O-Verb 25
From clean to Boogie Recto sounds, this 2xEL84 combo has 25W, two channels, and a 1x12" Fillmore 75 speaker
RRP **£1361**

overtones accompany the increase in gain, so the V20 sounds brighter. It's easy to make things smoother and sweeter by turning down the treble, but when you switch back to your clean sound there may not be enough sparkle. But remember that bright switch? Switch it in again and the clean channel's clarity and sparkle is restored. The rhythm channel sounds pure, sparkly and clear while the drive channel grunts and grinds with enough definition to cut through any mix.

Both channels share the master volume, but getting the volume levels balanced is relatively straightforward. For loud clean tones it's usual practice to max out the master while keeping the preamp volume low, but we don't think the V20 is designed to work that way. You certainly get a big, loud and clear tone but the signal to noise ratio suffers. Again, setting up the overdrive levels first pays off because the rhythm channel has so much clean headroom that its volume control does simply control volume – and volume only – until it reaches its upper limits.

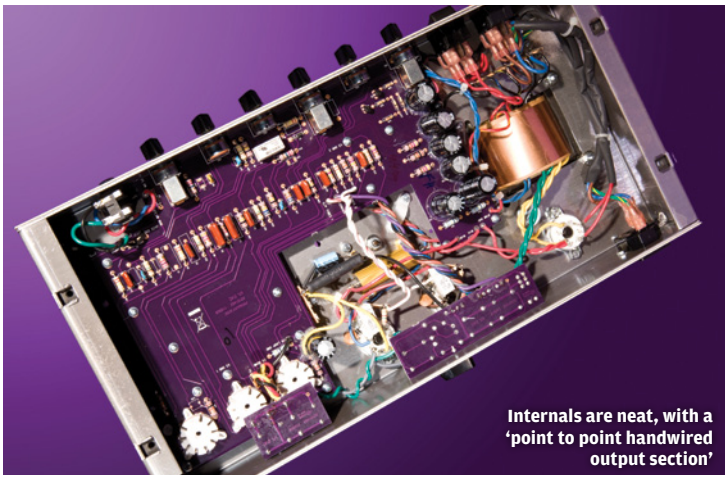
Whether you're running master high and volume low or vice versa, the sound of the clean channel remains fairly consistent, but we preferred the hint of overdrive and smoother touch dynamics with the preamp running hotter than the power amp. Think old-school medium-power US amp with chewier mids, improved clarity and less spiky transients, then you'll be in the ballpark.

Although 20W amps are hardly synonymous with heavy rock, the V20 provides oodles of gain if you want it. It's unusually loud for its power rating and has ample low-end response for drop tunings. Having said that, it's certainly not a crass gain monster.

With Drive low there's barely any difference between the two channels. Overdrive comes on gradually, progressing smoothly through mild overdrive into blues rock and creamy crunch. You won't get the dramatically scooped mids and fizzy bite of some US rock amps; the driven tones have solid mids that you can really dig into and creamy sustain that requires no stompbox assistance for soloing.

The V20's drive channel isn't fussy about guitars – we were able to dial up fine tones with various single coils and Filtertrons – but this amp sings with humbuckers. With Seymour Duncan Trembuckers and some Shed PAF Daddies the V20 delivered fat, smooth tones with superb definition and real solidity in the bass.

Stylish triangular controls offer two pull features – Brite and Thick


Internals are neat, with a 'point to point handwired output section'

Effects loop and a slave output with level control

Speaker is a hefty 75W unit and well suited to the V20's solid midrange

Verdict

We have minor reservations. First, the V20 loses a bit of vibrancy when a guitar's volume control is turned down, so it isn't the type of amp you can crank up and control with your fingers; still, the two channels cover such a wide range of cleans and overdrives that it hardly matters. Secondly, the 20W rating places the V20 into the 'studio' category, but in lieu of vents Budda has chosen to fit a cooling fan. While acceptable for gigging and jamming duties, its presence will probably be noticeable when recording. Otherwise, it's all good news. The V20 has a huge range of sounds, well thought-out controls and it sounds terrific. The master volume is a great success, controlling output level without making the tone fizzy and gutless. It may look like a boutique blues amp, but the V20 is more of a wolf in two-tone tolex.

FINAL SCORE

BUDDA SERIES II SUPERDRIVE V20	
Build Quality	**19**/20
Versatility	**18**/20
Sound	**18**/20
Value for money	**18**/20
Vibe	**18**/20
TOTAL	**91%**

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CARLSBRO
Kickstart 30

Two channels, a decent chunk of power, built-in effects, and all for a smidgen under the ton – Carlsbro's mid-sized Kickstart makes a convincing bid for the beginner's market. Review by **Huw Price**

Carlsbro have certainly gone for the 'boutique' look with the Kickstart series. We've got salt and pepper grille cloth, a sturdy faux leather handle, and a brushed metal control panel. The textured black tolex is well applied, and metal corner protectors should keep it looking good. Cosmetically at least, things are off to a good start.

The figure '30' refers to the quoted output power generated by the solid state circuitry. Other models in the series are rated at 10, 15, 50 and 100W, so Carlsbro seem to have all bases covered. The models with 15W and above have two footswitchable channels labelled Overdrive and Clean. Both share the Bass, Middle and Treble tone controls, but they have separate volume controls. The overdrive channel also has a Gain control for the preamp section.

For extra tone shaping, a Mid Shift switch notches out the midrange by 15dB. There are onboard effects too, and they're described as spring reverb, digital delay and analogue chorus. When we spoke with Carlsbro there was some uncertainty about whether the reverb and chorus are analogue or digital.

The reverb sounds as if it's generated by a genuine reverb tank because you get the tell-tale 'broing' noise when you bump the cabinet, but we couldn't see any kind of tank inside. The jury remains out on the chorus, and a Reverb/Delay switch dictates you can't use both effects simultaneously. A separate switch activates the chorus effect, and there's a dedicated Effects control; unfortunately it's dedicated only to the reverb and delay, so the chorus is an 'on or off' thing. As for the effects control, it merely sets the volume of the effect.

That's pretty much what you'd expect for the reverb, but the delay time and number of repeats are fixed.

The control panel also accommodates a channel switch, the input socket and the on/off switch. Mini jack sockets are also provided for line/MP3 input and headphones. Plugging in headphones mutes the output to the Carlsbro-branded 10" 8 Ohm speaker.

Effects knob controls the mix of the preset reverb/delay or chorus

The Kickstart 30's twin channels share the three tone controls, but the overdrive channel has a gain control

FACTFILE
Carlsbro Kickstart 30 combo

DESCRIPTION **Twin channel 30W solid state combo with a single 10" speaker, Line/MP3 input and Phones output. Made in China**
PRICE **£97.90**

CONTROLS **Gain, Volume (Channel 1), Volume (Channel 2), Bass, Middle, Treble and Effects with switches for channel selection, Mid Shift. Reverb/Delay and chorus effects**
DIMENSIONS **41cm high, 45cm wide, 22cm deep**
WEIGHT **11kg/24.2lbs**

CONTACT **Carlsbro 01908 281072 www.carlsbro.com**

Like this? Try this...

Kustom
KG212FX
This 30W 2x12" combo has two channels, Bass, Mid, Treble and Gain controls, headphone out, aux in, reverb, delay and chorus, FX loop and an external speaker out
RRP **£118**

Peavey
Rage 258
Latest in a long-established practice amp line, the 25W Rage has one 8" Blue Marvel, two channels, a three-band EQ, a Voice switch, tape/CD input and a headphone jack
RRP **£86**

Harley Benton
HB-80R
40W guitar combo with a 12" Celestion with Gain, Voice, Volume and two-band EQ on Channel 1 plus Gain, Volume and three-band EQ on Channel 2; reverb, channel switch, line out and ext speaker out
RRP **£100**

Sounds

It's a tall order for any analogue guitar amplifier to compete with digital modelling amps for versatility, but Carlsbro have given it a good shot. Since the Kickstart 30 is solid state, switching on is instantaneous... and the clean channel really is a genuinely clean-sounding channel. With single coils there's only a hint of overdrive even at maximum volume, but a large portion of that is probably coming from the speaker rather than the amp itself.

The clean tone is clear, natural and quite pleasing, with the natural sound of our test guitars coming straight through. The tone controls are quite powerful, but even at maximum treble the clean channel manages to stop short of harshness. With a hint of reverb dialled in and a semi-solid or fully hollow guitar in hand the Kickstart 30 produces a very credible jazz tone. We also enjoyed turning the treble and bass up high with the mids turned right down to obtain some scratchy and bright funk and surf tones.

Ultra-heavy and crunchy distortion is certainly on the menu but, like most budget solid state amps, the Kickstart 30 does veer towards a raspy fizziness that sounds nothing like valve distortion. This starts to become apparent when the gain control is turned up past 11 o'clock. Below that point the dirty channel has a far smoother and more useable overdrive, with a sound that's more modern rock than blues.

The distortion characteristic will leave you in no doubt that this amp is designed for crunch, and the Mid Shift switch is a key component. The effect is dramatic, as you'd expect from a 15dB cut; in fact, you may find it's a little too much. The Mid Shift also works on both channels, but we're not convinced that it does anything particularly beneficial for the clean side.

The reverb is a welcome feature and we liked its sound. Chorus is like the Marmite of the effect world, but again we found the preset very useable in a *Teen Spirit* sort of way. The delay is less convincing because you can't alter the delay time nor the number of repeats. We'd estimate the delay time at around half a second – not a very well-judged setting as it's long enough to mess up a groove and not short enough for rockabilly slapback.

The clean channel works well, as does the overdrive side, as long as you keep the gain down

The Kickstart 30 isn't very loud, but it has a lot of useful features and the build quality and the clean tone are good

Verdict

On the plus side the Kickstart 30 has a lot of useful features, it's extremely versatile, and it's cheap; then again, onboard digital effects, a line input and a headphone socket are all fairly standard on entry level amps these days. It may be rated at 30W, but you shouldn't place too much emphasis on that, as when you compare this amp with lower-wattage amps in its price range the Kickstart 30 isn't very loud at all. The clue is in the name: Kickstart amps are probably targeted at guitar players that are starting out. The build quality exceeds expectations at this price and you get a decent clean tone with just enough volume for small gigs. The overdrive channel gets a bit nasty, and not in a good way, but we enjoyed using stompboxes for overdrive and distortion on the clean channel.

The single speaker is a 10" unit, and there's no provision to add an external speaker

FINAL SCORE

CARLSBRO KICKSTART 30	
Build quality	**16**/20
Versatility	**15**/20
Sound	**15**/20
Value for money	**17**/20
Looks	**17**/20
TOTAL	**80%**

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model BB-1
LEVEL
TONE
ATTACK
SUSTAIN
BLACK FORMICA
COMPRESSOR
model BF-1

YERASOV

GT-1 Green Tick Screamer, BC-1 Brown Creature Distortion, BB-1 Beige Bug Booster & BF-1 Black Formica Compressor

You most likely haven't heard of them, but Yerasov in Penza, Russia been making amps since the '90s and guitar effects since the late 1980s. Glad they're over here? You bet. Review by **Richard Purvis**

Yerasov? It might look like the first seven letters of an especially perplexing Countdown conundrum, but there's a good reason why this new Russian name needs to be taken seriously. You'll find it in the December 2013 issue of this very mag, on page 51 to be precise, where the Yerasov GTA-15 is crowned our sub-£1000 amp of the year. If you'd never heard of them before last year, don't worry, neither had we; but remember, it was the Russians who put the first man, the first woman and (most importantly) the first dog in space, so there's no reason why they shouldn't be able to translate some of that technical nous to the world of noisy guitars. And Russia even has some pedigree in FX pedals, as any owner of a Sovtek-made Big Muff will tell you.

So here we have four fine-looking samples from Yerasov's 'Insect' series. They don't much look like insects – and they're not small – but they do have a picture of a creepy-crawly on the name badge. Inside, we find a vertical circuit board squeezed up at the top by the pots, with the sockets and footswitch at the bottom and a battery clip relaxing in the large space that's left in the middle. You'll notice that the in/out sockets are metal, while the pots are by Alpha and the signal capacitors are all WIMA – a name forever associated with early Vox amps, though these blocky red caps might not have much in common with the old gold ones. The wiring looks tidy, and you get the impression these pedals would last a lot longer in a whizzing satellite than poor Laika did.

GT-1 GREEN TICK SCREAMER

Just in case the green paint doesn't give it away, including the word 'Screamer' in the name of the pedal makes it clear what sort of overdrive we're looking at here. The one obvious divergence from the classic Tube Screamer template is the addition of a Fat switch, which should be a big plus for those who don't like the way standard TS types carve a slice off the low frequencies. For some reason this is wired upside-down, so you engage the chubbiness by flicking it up *away* from the word 'Fat'. If that really bothers you, give yourself a slap.

With the Gain control set low, we're presented with all the ingredients of a quality Tube Screamer sound: tasteful

FINAL SCORE

GT-1 GREEN TICK SCREAMER	
Build Quality	**19**/20
Playability	**18**/20
Sound	**17**/20
Value for money	**17**/20
Looks	**17**/20
TOTAL	**88%**

FACTFILE

GT-1 GREEN TICK SCREAMER

DESCRIPTION **Overdrive pedal. Made in Russia**
PRICE **£83**

CONTROLS **Volume, Tone, Drive; Fat switch**

BC-1 BROWN CREATURE DISTORTION

DESCRIPTION **Distortion pedal. Made in Russia**
PRICE **£87**

CONTROLS **Volume, Treble, Middle, Bass, Gain**

BB-1 BEIGE BUG BOOSTER

DESCRIPTION **Clean boost pedal. Made in Russia**
PRICE **£79**

CONTROLS **Boost, High cut, Low cut**

BF-1 BLACK FORMICA COMPRESSOR

DESCRIPTION **Compressor pedal. Made in Russia**
PRICE **£78**

CONTROLS **Level, Tone, Attack, Sustain**

CONTACT **Yerasov UK**
07534 429269
www.yerasov.co.uk

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Blackstar
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Mooer
Micro series
Pretty much the same story as Joyo, only the pedals are about half the size; the Tube Screamer is particularly good
RRP **£45-£65**

crunch with a distinct upper-mids hump and a noticeably lightweight bottom end. The Fat switch brings back all the lower frequencies and seems to flatten out the hump too, leaving something much closer to the EQ profile of the bypass signal. At more overdriven settings the thinness is more obvious, and here the Fat boost becomes essential. Maybe the Green Tick doesn't quite nail the miraculous transparency of an original Ibanez/Maxon Tube Screamer, but it's close.

BC-1 BROWN CREATURE DISTORTION

This time there's no attempt at transparency, even with the Gain down at nine o'clock: just a smooth, thick and frothy distortion. Cranking the gain makes things agreeably metallish, with chords holding their shape and single notes yelling out with an extra layer of harmonic richness. The Mids control gives good scoop, while everything on the Treble control seems to happen quite quickly around the two o'clock point – though it never gets too spiky. This pedal has quite a lot of background noise relative to gain but, the more you crank it, the less you're likely to care.

BB-1 BEIGE BUG BOOSTER

Perhaps the word 'beige' doesn't have the same connotations of blandness and suburban despair in Russian. Still, the concept itself is a nice idea: a clean boost with attenuation controls for both treble and bass. With both of these on full (so not cutting anything) and Boost on zero, what comes out is a perfect bypass tone. You absolutely cannot hear the effect going on or off – an impressive start.

Plug into a valve amplifier somewhere close to breaking up, however, and the Beige Bug will soon make itself heard very clearly indeed: 30dB is quite a lot of boost to have at your feet. To an extent, how good it sounds depends on the amp it's driving, because that's what's really doing the work, but a clean boost is supposed to be pure and uncoloured and that's exactly what this one is. Most players will probably end up keeping both tone controls at maximum or thereabouts, just lopping off a touch of treble if things get too shrill. With both set low you get more emphasis on honky midrange, but there are no crappy sounds available here.

BF-1 BLACK FORMICA COMPRESSOR

Forget all thoughts of plastic laminate: formica is also a genus of ant. This is just as well, as a picture of a wipe-clean table-top wouldn't really have worked. The BF-1 is a compressor with an added tone control and, despite the name, it's most definitely blue; more significantly it's the least 'plug and play' of the four pedals on test: with all the controls at noon it sounds quite unnatural and, as with many affordable compressors, the challenge is to get nicely squeezed notes without an unnatural pop at the beginning of each one.

It's all about the balance between Attack and Sustain – go easy on the latter, in particular, and the BF-1 will do its job of raising up the quiet bits and flattening out the loud bits, making a dramatic difference to your playing dynamics without any obvious effect on tone. Fast attack times are handy for taming the spiky transients of single-coil pickups, and if you find that this knocks out a shade too much of your guitar's top-end content, a nudge on the Tone control can put back just enough sweet treble to compensate.

VERDICT

These Yerasov effects are insects that demand to be stomped on. They're extremely well designed and well built, offering high-quality sounds for not much cash – and they prove that, while most western manufacturers in this price bracket have long since given up and outsourced everything but the tea-round to China, our Russian friends still know how to make stuff for themselves. Tsk, who won the bloody Cold War anyway?

FINAL SCORE

BC-1 BROWN CREATURE DISTORTION	
Build Quality	**19**/20
Playability	**19**/20
Sound	**18**/20
Value for money	**17**/20
Looks	**17**/20
TOTAL	**90%**

FINAL SCORE

BB-1 BEIGE BUG BOOSTER	
Build Quality	**19**/20
Playability	**18**/20
Sound	**18**/20
Value for money	**17**/20
Looks	**17**/20
TOTAL	**89%**

FINAL SCORE

BF-1 BLACK FORMICA COMPRESSOR	
Build Quality	**19**/20
Playability	**16**/20
Sound	**15**/20
Value for money	**17**/20
Looks	**17**/20
TOTAL	**84%**

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MARTIN
000RS1

The all-mahogany 000-15 reissue became a cult classic in the Martin range, and the 000RS1 is pretty much an economy version with stage-ready electronics as standard. Review by **Rick Batey**

Martin's affordable Road Series and 1 Series guitars went through some changes over the years, and sometimes it felt hard to keep track of the various specs – solid backs here, laminated sides there, solid-wood necks on this model, gloss tops on others. The current combined '1/Road' Series is a lot easier to get a handle on, and this 000RS1 is the latest model to join a line-up that has served well in keeping the hallowed Martin name available to players at a more affordable price.

The main alteration, about four years ago, was when Martin decided that since savings had to be made, there was a good chance that all-solid top, back and sides in combination with a laminated neck might work better overall than semi-solid body construction with a solid wood neck – and that's exactly what we have with the 000RS1. The other change is that the current 1/Roads are not made in Nazareth, Pennsylvania, like the original Roads, but in Navajoa, Mexico.

The 000RS1's top, sides and back are solid sapele, harking back to the hugely successful 15 Series, the Martins that brought all-mahogany body construction right back into the mainstream. Sapele tends to be a little stripier-looking than true mahogany but most feel that to all intents and purposes it's tonally indistinguishable; our 000's back is two-piece and slightly veed, the top is also two piece but more straight-grained. The all-over satin finish suits it well, as does the lack of any body binding; it's a folky, minimal look, although the soundhole rosette is a somewhat stark white.

Genuine rosewood head facing and smooth sealed tuners

The 'Rust' colour impregnated into the neck looks better than the old pinkish hue

The 000RS1's top, back and sides are solid sapele, the neck is Stratabond and the fingerboard is black Richlite

The bracing is the 'A-frame X-1' which has an X-brace with an A-shape pointing from soundhole to neckblock, an angled bridgeplate, and simplified struts that are not scalloped, but tapered towards the ends; essentially, it's minimal in the lower bouts and sturdy in the upper bouts. The back bracing is regular, and there's no central backstrip. ➔

FACTFILE
Martin 000RS1

DESCRIPTION **Electro-acoustic 000-size guitar. Made in Mexico**
PRICE **£729 inc. case**

BUILD **Solid sapele top with A-frame X-1 bracing, solid sapele back and sides, no binding. Multi-laminate Stratabond neck with 22-fret Richlite fingerboard and Richlite bridge with Tusq saddle, bone nut, enclosed chrome tuners, neck heel strap button**
ELECTRICS **Fishman Sonitone system with Vol and Tone thumbwheels inside soundhole**
LEFT-HANDERS **Yes, at no extra cost**
FINISH **Satin**

SCALE LENGTH
643mm/25.4"
NECK WIDTH
Nut 42.8mm
12th fret 55mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 22.5mm
10th fret 25mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 37mm
Bridge 54mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 2.4mm
12th fret bass 2.8mm
WEIGHT **1.95kg/4.3lb**

CONTACT **Westside Distribution**
0141 248 4812
www.martinguitar.com

Like this? Try this...

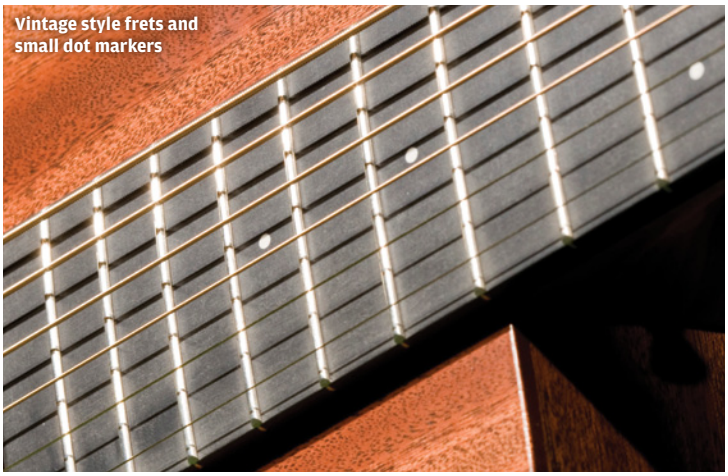
Guild
M120E
This stylish folk guitar has a solid 'hog top, back and sides and a Fishman Sonitone set up. The gloss body and matte neck and a real rosewood board and bridge makes tough competition for the OOORS1
RRP **£634.80**

Freshman
Apollo Boutique
AB3 Autumn
Another OOO with a Fishman Sonitone. This comes with a cutaway and lots of bling: it sacrifices solid wood, but laminated koa looks very smart
RRP **£499**

Taylor
322e
Taylor's solid mahogany satin-finish folk electro wins on specs with a solid wood neck, full binding, an ebony board and the Taylor Expression System, but it costs a fair bit more
RRP **£1175**

In Martin's world the A-frame goes hand-in-hand with the mortise-and-tenon neck joint, and the OOORS1 also has a 'Rust Stratabond' neck. Stratabond means multi-laminated, like certain Framus guitars from the '60s, with around 20 strips making up the width at the nut. 'Rust' means it's tinted in production, and not all the strips reflect the colour evenly, but we quite like the look, as we also like the Modified Low Oval neck shape and the nicely-fitted bone nut. The fingerboard and the bridge are Richlite, an ebony-imitating phenolic resin; the frets are narrow and vintage-style, and though the nut width is only 1 11/16"/42.8mm, it feels just about roomy enough, as does the 2 1/8" spacing at the bridge.

One slightly surprising thing – especially for a brand-new Martin –is that there isn't much saddle left. With a current action at the 12th fret of 2.8mm on the bottom E and 2.4mm on the top you wouldn't be considered nuts for wanting it to come down a smidge, especially if you're a fingerstylist with a light touch. The saddle, though, is a mere 2mm high, which allows sufficient adjustment at the moment but might not do so at some point in the distant future. It's not a huge warning bell, but


Vintage style frets and small dot markers

The OOORS1 has a bright, dry, sweet, slightly mid-focussed tone, and it's in the same ballpark as the OOO-15M

worth mentioning. Final details: the OOORS1 comes with a strap button at the heel... top marks. Electronics are taken care of by the Fishman Sonitone system; the tuners are sealed units and very smooth, and the strings are .012"-.054" Martin Lifespans.

Soundhole control wheels for volume and treble reduction

Saving measures: the neck has no heelcap and the solid sapele body lacks binding

Sound

With a 14-fret long-scale OOO you know what you're going to get: brightness, balance, and a sound well suited to the fingerpicker or finger/pick player. The OOORS1 once again shows's Martin's skill at providing a Martinesque sound even on a guitar with many non-traditional elements built two and a half thousand miles away from Nazareth, PA. It's bright, sure, but it's got a good sense of softness to the trebles, bouncy, wiry mids and a nice solid bottom string. Volume is medium, the sustain is good. The killer question, of course, is – does it sound like a OOO-15M? Well, to a degree, yes. It's got a dry, sweet, slightly compressed, mid-focussed tone and it's very much in the same ballpark, as our US cousins would say; not quite the same openness or sensitivity, we'd venture, but they say you can't remember a precise sound for longer than seven seconds, and it's been a heck of a lot longer than that since we picked up a OOO-15. So, it sounds pretty good.

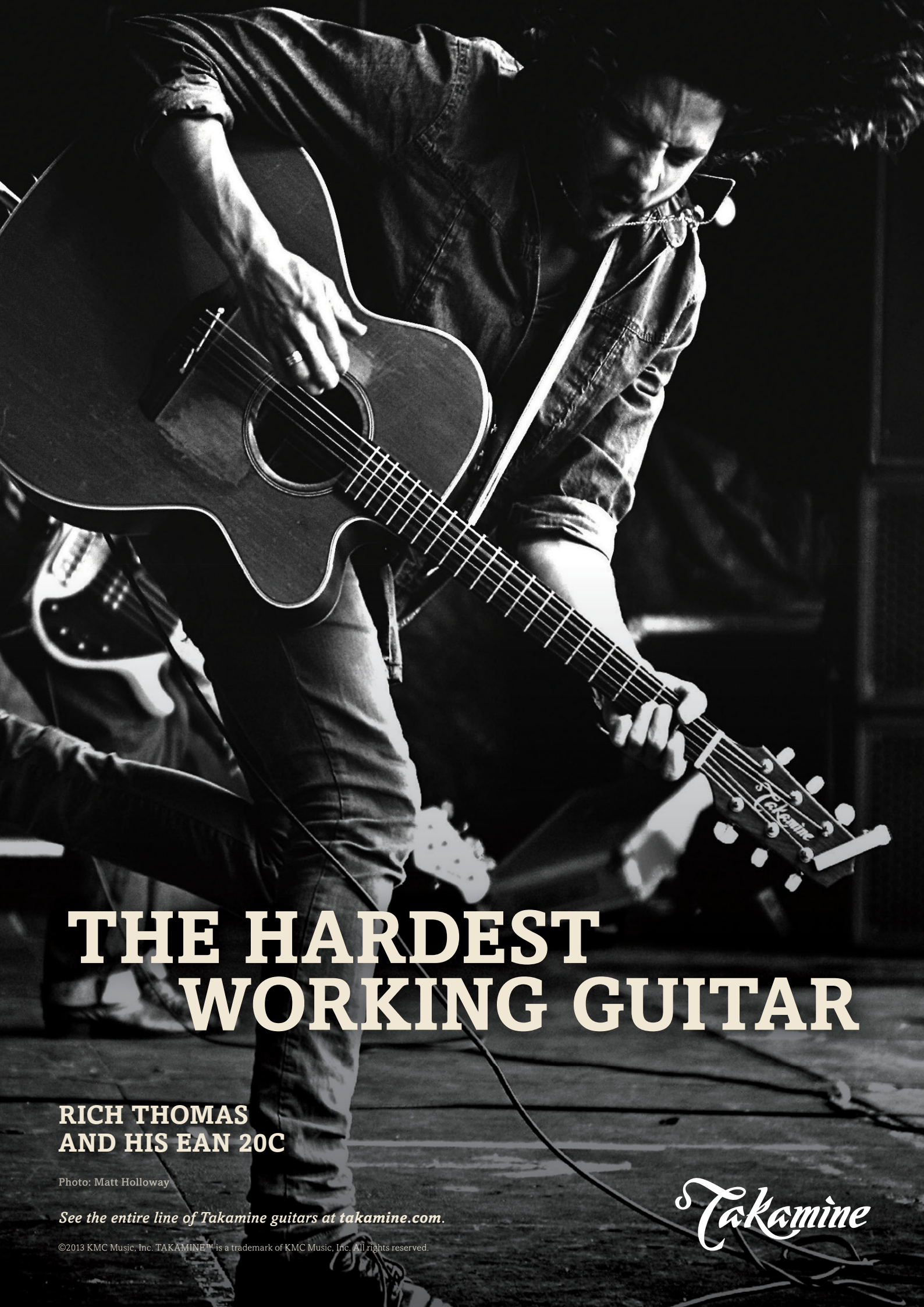
We've reviewed the Fishman Sonitone before; it's a simple flexible braided undersaddle piezo linked to soundhole-mounted volume and treble controls. The sound is typically Fishman, string-to-string balance seems fine, and the soundhole controls aren't that easy to tweak but their invisibility is laudable. The two drawbacks are the fabric battery pocket, which no fun to access without removing all the strings, and the lack of proper multi-band EQ, not to mention phase reverse, but it's good enough to allow you to jump up at an open-mic night and get a decent level while having control over a degree of top-end zing. Aside from that, you'll be depending on an outboard preamp – or the whim of the sound person.

Verdict

The 1/Road Series is a well-honed part of the Martin range, slicing spendy production processes without sacrificing the most vital tonal factors or build quality. The new OOORS1 undercuts the gloss-top, sitka-belly, scalloped hybrid X-braced OM-1GT in price while adding a useful flavour to the line. This guitar sits at a delicate point – risking, perhaps, the emigration of the trad-minded customer to whom the idea of phenolic fingerboards and multi-laminate necks just doesn't seem right. It's also unlikely to win the electro race with those who need fine onboard EQ control, but conversely likely to attract those who reckon that an all-solid mahogany body, a nice sound, a simple pickup system and the Martin name adds up to a pretty tasty deal.

FINAL SCORE

MARTIN OOORS1	
Build Quality	**17**/20
Playability	**18**/20
Sound	**16**/20
Value for money	**17**/20
Looks	**16**/20
TOTAL	**84%**



THE HARDEST WORKING GUITAR

RICH THOMAS AND HIS EAN 20C

Photo: Matt Holloway

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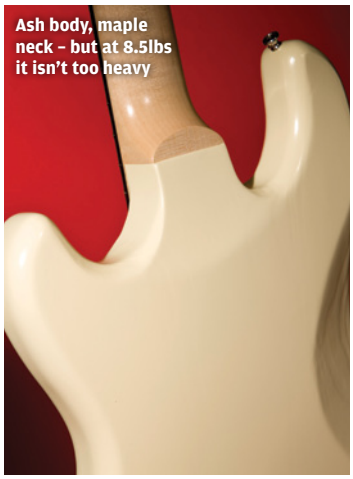
GIBSON
EB Bass

Stylish, practical and very keenly priced, Gibson's latest solidbody bass raises the eyebrows in more ways than one. Review by **Gareth Morgan**

Gibson were relative latecomers to the world of the electric bass, downright tardy if you narrow the classification down to include the word 'versatile'. While Fender launched their workhorse Precision in the closing months of 1951, Gibson's first offering was the EB-1 in 1953, violin-shaped with one pickup butted up against the neck, meaning that the most you could hope for in terms of sound was any degree of definition whatsoever. The semi-hollowbody, ES-335-shaped EB-2 followed in 1958; this had the same single pickup butted up against the neck, but at least offered a 'baritone button' to give a more midrange-oriented tone. In the following year Gibson finally introduced a solidbody bass, the EB-0, with a shape akin to the double-cutaway Les Paul Special, and when this morphed into the SG-shaped EB-3, an axe favoured by Jack Bruce and Free's Andy Fraser, they finally had a real footing in the electric bass world.

In recent times we've been treated to a steady flow of Gibson basses based on models ostensibly from the '70s, such as the Krist Novoselic RD (see review in our April 2012 issue, Vol 23/7). All well and good, but it doesn't look like Gibson has done anything to advance the concept behind their basses for decades. However, change is afoot, if the brand new EB Bass is anything to go by.



Ash body, maple neck – but at 8.5lbs it isn't too heavy

Classy two-per-side headstock with chrome Grovers

The EB Bass looks like a cross between an RD and a Precision, with a wave-like tortie pickguard to add retro kudos

Well, it's certainly different-looking, although it easy to trace the inspiration: the bottom half is much like a Gibson RD bass, while the top half – and the forearm chamfer and ribcage cut – takes its main cues from a Precision. In a seated position the EB is as well-balanced as you'd hope... not always something that could be said about previous basses from this company (Thunderbird, anyone?). Gibson has used ash for the body, the satin cream overcoat being one of four nitro finishes, all 'grain textured' to allow the natural patterning of the wood to show through; nice touch. Elsewhere, the rambling, wave-like tortoiseshell pickguard adds some retro kudos and a touch of class. Overall, it's an interesting and appealing design.

Gibson employs maple for the neck, attached to the body in classic Gibson fashion using the set-in method. Up until recent times, as little as 10 years ago, maple would be viewed as an unusual choice, but RD and Ripper ➔

FACTFILE
Gibson EB Bass

DESCRIPTION **Solidbody bass. Made in USA**
PRICE **£779 with hard case**

BUILD **Ash body, set-in maple neck with mortise and tenon joint, 20 medium jumbo nickel frets on a rosewood fingerboard. Grover 20:1 ratio tuners and Babicz FCH 4 bridge. Chrome hardware**

ELECTRICS **Passive with two Gibson Jim DeCola-designed coil-tapped humbucking pickups with Alnico V magnets. Two Volumes (pull for single coil mode) and one Tone control**
LEFT-HANDERS **Yes, at no extra cost**
FINISH **Satin cream, satin fireburst, natural satin, satin ebony**
RANGE OPTIONS **Five-string version, £879**

SCALE LENGTH
864mm/34"
NECK WIDTH
Nut 40mm
12th fret 55mm
DEPTH OF NECK
First fret 20mm
12th fret 22mm
STRING SPACING
Nut 11mm
Bridge 19mm
ACTION AS SUPPLIED
12th fret treble 2mm
12th fret bass 2.5mm
WEIGHT
3.84kg/8.47lbs

CONTACT
Gibson UK
020 7167 2144
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RRP **£1052**

reissues have been kitted out in the same way. The profile is a shallow 'C' contour that's really slim and feels comfortable and ultra-fast under the hand – again, not something you might expect from a Gibson bass. There's a strengthening volute on the back, and the black-faced headstock is the traditional thinning oblong with handle-bar moustache detail on its furthest edge. We not sure it entirely goes with the EB's modern styling, but it underlines the Gibson heritage. The headstock also bears the Gibson logo, a bell-shaped trussrod access cover, and a set of gleaming chrome Grover tuners with a 20:1 ratio and small, T-shaped buttons. The white nut is made of Corian (a solid material created by American chemical giants DuPont and composed of acrylic polymer and alumina trihydrate), and the rosewood fingerboard carries white acrylic dot markers (a further set line the top edge) and 20 medium jumbo nickel frets. There is one minor issue: the edges at the tang are a little too flush to the side of the neck for best playing comfort. For the bridge Gibson has chosen the Babicz FCH 4, which promises full contact or 'direct coupling' between the string and the body of the bass. You need a Phillips screwdriver and small Allen key for adjustment purposes.

The EB is kitted out with a pair of passive Gibson humbuckers with Alnico V magnets that have been designed in-house by head honcho luthier Jim DeCola. Their twin lines of exposed poles puts one in mind of a Music Man, and pulling up the Volume controls ignites single-coil mode. Gibson says this 'accesses a new frequency-tuned coil tap for a fatter single tone and better output balance'.

Independent volumes with push-pull coil taps and a master tone control

Super-solid Babicz bridge with saddles that lock the string height

The EB is fat and growly with solid mids and a zingy high-mid sheen that almost heads in the direction of a StingRay

Sounds

The EB continues to exceed expectations when you plug in. The humbucking tone is fat and growly with plenty of lively harmonics at the bottom end, with a tight, solid and punchy midrange with excellent definition and a zingy, high-mid sheen that provides clarity and almost heads in the direction of a StingRay. Overall, it's a good, versatile, old-school rock, blues and soul tone, a tone which gradually gets smoother and more rumbly when you back off the tone control.

As Gibson promised, single-coil mode is pleasingly volume-matched. It's a brighter and snappier offering, and the E string has a more controlled growl. It's well-endowed with bottom end; a little tighter and brighter and less aggressive in the midrange, but this time the highs are far more open, making this setting sound almost funky – you could even, shock horror, obtain a decent slap sound. Again, cutting back on the tone will give a more controlled sound and one that'll work well for more contemporary pop applications.

The various humbucking/single coil combinations aren't hugely varied, but each combination has a slight but noticeable effect on the basic tone. The single-coil bridge/neck humbucker option gets you tighter, sharper low notes with less of a woolly thud; up top, the trebles are cleaner and more open. Reversing this setting produces a scooped mids effect on lower notes with smoother, fatter lows and a feeling of less stature – you've just become less audible in the mix by notch or two. Thinner strings are a fraction tighter and brighter, although not brittle, and the high-mid zing remains to add that slightly modern edge.

Verdict

If this is not the best bass that Gibson has produced for a very long time – or ever, in fact – it's certainly their most versatile. It's a handsome instrument, doing very much its own thing. It's traditional without being dated, it's a reasonable weight and, fret issues aside, is great fun to play with plenty of practical, if a tad zingy, variations on tap. And, hang on a minute: a Gibson bass, made in the USA, for less than £800? With their reputation? Are they mad? Well, if you're looking for a top-notch passive bass to act as a stylish workhorse, you'd be mad not to try Gibson's new EB.

FINAL SCORE

GIBSON EB BASS	
Build Quality	**18**/20
Playability	**18**/20
Sound	**16**/20
Value for money	**17**/20
Vibe	**17**/20
TOTAL	**86%**

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INPUT
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SEND
RETURN

AGUILAR
Tone Hammer 500 & SL112 Cabinet

Still small and independent, US company Aguilar makes some of the best-regarded bass gear around. This month, we examine the medium-power head and a featherweight 1x12". Review by **Gareth Morgan**

We at *Guitar & Bass* first encountered Aguilar's wares back in our January 2006 issue (Vol 16 No 11) with our review of the excellent AG500 combo, but 2015 will be their 20th anniversary. Aguilar was formed back in 1995 by current company President Dave Boonshoft and Alex Aguilar. Boonshoft had been a busy session bassist in New York the '80s, and he also ran a hire company specialising in high-quality valve preamps and compressors for studio use. It was this tapestry of ventures that initially led him to come up with a concept for a bass preamp, a design drawn out on a napkin which engineer/designer Alex Aguilar brought to life, and it was eventually christened the DB680. The company has gradually expanded their product base to include amplifiers, cabinets, combos, pickups and pedals, with Jeff Lipman assuming Alex Aguilar's role after the latter's departure in early 2004. The most recent additions to the range of Aguilar amplifiers and cabinets focuses on small, lightweight units, and this month we're looking at the Tone Hammer 500 amp and SL112 cab.

The TH500 is one of the simplest modern bass heads to operate, with only the parametric mids to worry about

The tiny Aguilar TH500 head weighs just 4lbs, the cabinet 25lbs. You'll reduce the chances of back problems by 80 per cent

There's an ever-expanding roster of choices for the discerning bassist keen to purchase a top-notch amplifier but eager to minimise the probability of this going hand-in-hand with the future development of a serious back problem. Twenty years ago we'd consider 30kg a reasonable weight, but the advent of Class D power means that you can reduce your expectations by over 80 per cent. Standing 75mm high, 272mm wide by 217mm deep, Aguilar's diminutive TH500 rams this point home by weighing in at a sensationally featherlight 1.8kg/4lbs, a payload that takes full advantage of the solid state preamp/class D power amp/switching mode power supply combo which doesn't require any form of heat sink; indeed to describe the onboard cooling fan as 'titchy' and almost pointless is no exaggeration. The Tone Hammer ➔

FACTFILE
AGUILAR TONE HAMMER 500 & SL112 CABINET

DESCRIPTION **TH500: single channel, 500W solid state/digital amplifier. SL112: 250W 1x12" cabinet with an Eminence speaker and a phenolic tweeter**
PRICE **£749 & £789**

CONTROLS **TH500: Gain (with -10dB switch), Drive, Bass, Mid Level, Mid Frequency, Treble and Master controls and Mute switch. Input, Tuner Out and FX loop jack sockets, two Speakon Speaker Outs and Balanced DI Out XLR socket with Post/Pre and Ground/Lift switches. SL112: tweeter level control, two jack and one Speakon input sockets**
RANGE OPTIONS **Tone Hammer 350 amplifier, 350W, £529**
DIMENSIONS **TH500: 27.5cm wide, 21.5cm deep, 7cm high. SL112: 37.5cm high, 48.2cm wide, 45.8cm deep**
WEIGHT **TH500: 1.8kg/4lbs. SL112: 11.36kg/25lbs**

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Barefaced
Super Midget
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RRP **£599**

Genz Benz
Focus FCS 112T
Another strong 1x12" bass cab contender; not expensive, it copes with 200W and weighs a decent 14.5kg/32lbs
RRP **£250**

Eden
EX110
If a single 10" speaker is enough then this 300W cabinet could suffice, and it's light at 11.35kg/25lbs
RRP **£166**

is essentially an amplifier realisation of Aguilar's preamp/DI box of the same name, with the addition of one extra control and a whole load of power. All the good stuff is lodged within a solid metal casing, finished black save for the silver grey front panel where the seven black plastic controls with white pointers are arranged to emphasise where the main action takes place.

The Gain control sitting furthest top left has a -10dB active/passive pad switch, and the four right-hand side dials deal with pure EQ. Bass gives 17dB of cut or boost at 40Hz, Treble offers +/- 16dB @4kHz, and Mid Level provides 16dB of cut or boost at a point anywhere between 180Hz and 1kHz, chosen by the parametric Mid Frequency knob. It's a pity that the Frequency dial isn't labelled in any way; it might actually lead the discerning EQ-ist to make better or more concise choices about where to doctor their midrange, but those of us who aren't confident about EQ-ing in general are much happier to undertake this task when it doesn't feel like a leap of blind faith.

Aside from the Master volume, the TH500 has a Drive control, a neat feature that works in conjunction with the position of the Gain control giving, say Aguilar, 'a vintage voiced EQ and gain structure'. Combining Drive and Gain levels will also produce distortion but Drive is also effects tone, dependent on which level Gain is set; at low gain levels there's very little boost or cut to the EQ, while at higher levels you get a tighter bottom end and smoother highs.

The front panel also carries the FX loop, a balanced DI XLR Out with Ground/Lift and Pre/Post switches, and a super-handy global mute switch. Around the back there's a Tuner Out jack socket and a pair of Speakon speaker outs.

Variable tweeter control plus two phono ins and a Neutrik Speakon socket

The SL112 is built from lightweight plywood and is very nicely finished indeed

The SL112 cabinet has steel corner protectors and rubber feet, with cool looks courtesy of the chunkily-framed '50s-style grey cloth grille and the old-school company logo. The box is made from Lite Ply, which is a sort of posh MDF, with a mottled black vinyl finish; 378mm high, 485mm wide and 459mm deep and weighing 11.34kg/25lbs, it's very compact and ultra-portable. Weight is further minimised by the Neodymium-magnet 12" Eminence. There's a Phenolic tweeter here too, with a level control next to the single Speakon and twin input jack sockets on the back panel.

Sounds

With EQ set flat, the squat little Aguilar rig delivers an excellent rendition of your bass' acoustic sound – nicely detailed with plenty of bottom end and a growling edge, solid midrange that's bright and punchy, and fully-realised highs. Dialling in the horn on the SL112 to about halfway on the level control induces just enough spikiness for more aggressive applications without overpowering the sound with extraneous noise, but the further you push the level, the more the thin, glassy hi-fi element will increase.

EQ-wise there's plenty of additional bottom end available, and cranking the level uncorks a splendid warm, retro blues and soul sound at about halfway before sailing into dubbier waters at full boost, retaining excellent definition as it goes (especially with half horn level). The effect of the Treble control is somewhat married to the horn, of course. Without the horn you get a top end that's snappy without being too slicing, and higher pitches have a sweet, singing quality; add the horn and the Aguilar produces a zingy, more modern sound with lots of zesty harmonics and a more guitaristic feel from the thinner strings. With the mid section, the sounds vary from dark and solid with a fat, almost woolly impact to a brighter, tighter kick, then gnarlier and brighter-still sounds which combines with fingerstyle funk to give a nice, deep, burpy tone without a hint of excessive high mid. We like that very much.

You can use the Drive control together with the Gain to add varying intensities of soupy distortion, but using Drive with the mid section is very interesting. Turning the Drive left enlivens and adds massive presence to your sound – satisfyingly nasty at higher frequencies – or you can combine just a hint of note break-up with real impact at the business end.

Verdict

The TH500 and SL112 are top-notch pieces of gear. They give a very true-sounding tone with superbly even clarity across the spectrum, and it's easy to dial up a variety of sounds via the well-organised and highly musical EQ. While we're not really sold on the Drive function, using it and the horn level control on the SL112 does provide a greater variety of tonal flavours that only increases the versatility of the rig – and a payload of less than 14kg for the whole thing is spectacular. Even though it's a little expensive relative to the competition, the compact design and great looks are a big plus. If you're looking for a lightweight solution to your amplifier needs, put this on the shopping list immediately.

FINAL SCORE

AGUILAR TONE HAMMER 500 & SL112 CABINET	
Build Quality	**19**/20
Versatility	**17**/20
Sound	**19**/20
Value for money	**16**/20
Vibe	**18**/20
TOTAL	**89%**

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OMG!! The DOUBLE FOUR is unbelievable! It sounds so big and warm and beautiful. Congratulations! - Nathan East:NAMM 2013

The rear of the DOUBLE FOUR showing the RALFR Port Array

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Main Dealers for Gibson & Fender

Gibson Les Paul Standard 1959 Tom Murphy

Even the most fabulous and expensive guitar can use the touch of a skilled tech to get it set up and purring like it should. **Steve Clarke** takes a look at a used high-end Les Paul reissue to see how it stacks up

Over the years there has been a huge variety of Gibson Les Paul reissues aiming to recreate those golden years between 1958 and 1960, and each one has gone a little further than the last by reproducing pickup accuracy, period-correct electrics and colour-correct binding – so when this guitar arrived for a general set up, my expectations were high.

The owner reveals that the guitar was purchased in 2000 and is from a limited run of 100, with a certificate of authenticity. Upon opening the case you can't help but immediately notice the truly vibrant sunburst colour that shows off this guitar beautifully. It has a detailed flame top that when viewed from different angles appear almost 3D. The quality of the bookmatching is faultless.

Construction

The back of the guitar looks to be Brazilian mahogany, and when compared to the Gibson Custom '59 Standard reissue, which had very small flecks in the pattern, I think this one looks more authentic. It's said that some time ago both body and neck had to be re-engineered, and some materials for this

guitar and its parts were made to a standard of detail never seen before... and it shows. For instance, the headstock thickness tapers slightly more noticeably than on the '59 Gibson Custom Standard, although that was still a killer guitar. The maple top is deep-dished on the Murphy and it's good to see that the crown inlays have not been aged, because Gibson have a horrible knack of making the plastic bindings and switch caps a little too orange – but the rest of the guitar has been aged beautifully. The weight is a comfortable 8.6lb and the body is not chambered.

Nut

The nut measures 43mm and is made from bone and cut almost perfectly – except for the bottom E string slot which is a bit too high and has thus been taken down a touch. This guitar cost £5000 in 2000, but if the nut has not been accurately cut it will never be in tune. I've had three Gibson Les Pauls in the last two weeks, one Custom and two Standards, and they all needed the nut re-cutting. The depth of the neck is 25mm at the first fret and 28mm at the octave.

Neck

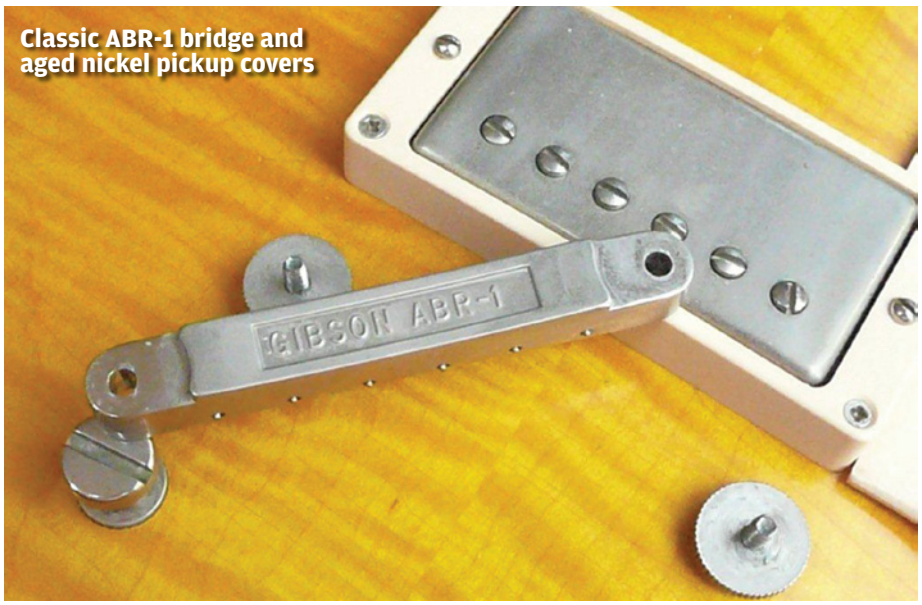
Les Paul necks from '59 tend to be clubby. This one is no exception, and it's topped with a beautiful dark rosewood fingerboard. Surprisingly it's very comfortable to play, with frets that are high-medium oval; the frets are not too high, though, to minimise intonation problems when fretting notes. The nibs on the binding are very cleanly finished with no file or sanding marks: perfect. The bridge is an ABR-1 and the tailpiece is nickel-plated.

Finish

Recently I took the thick polyester finish off an Epiphone LP Standard down to within a whisker of breaking through the thin veneer, and I can honestly say that it made a big improvement to the acoustic sound and the dynamics of the guitar. The lacquer on the Murphy – as with the Kossoff Les Paul which we reviewed in August 2012 – is not too thick, which many feel helps with the tone of this guitar no end. The tuners are Klusons and don't feel sloppy. Having removed the neck pickup, the all-important long tenon was visible. I did a test on two comparable Epi Standards and although they sounded the same to my ears, when I put a piece of rosewood in the slot at the end of the fingerboard on one of them and played it, there was a noticeable difference to the sound. So the Murphy with the long tenon is perfectly set to deliver extra harmonic quality.

The aging of this guitar has been done sympathetically. It has some small dings and the top of the guitar has a checked look, but it isn't overdone. It's as if the guitar has been played a lot, but cared for very well.

Long tenon construction is visible when the neck pickup is removed



Classic ABR-1 bridge and aged nickel pickup covers

Thin black-stained holly headstock veneer and 'tulip' Kluson tuning keys

The Tom Murphy-finished Les Pauls have become very collectable. This guitar is part of a run of 100 40th Anniversaries

Pickups

The pickups on the Tom Murphy are Classic '57 humbuckers that are nickel plated and slightly aged. The 7.75 Ohms bridge pickup is chimey and rich in harmonics when put through a clean amp, while through a Marshall it delivers every sound a classic Les Paul should. A hot pickup, on the other hand, can deliver distortion at low settings but can also colour the tone a bit at the expense of harmonics, but his bridge pickup has that 'honk' – very nice for that classic '70s rock sound. The middle position has a lovely ES-335 semi-solid sounding quality to it and is wonderful for rhythm or can be heavenly with a chorus pedal without losing character. The neck pickup is beautifully rich with just the right amount of bass – something other Les Pauls can fail to offer, sounding too fat unless you turn the volume down a bit. This could be why it comes in at 7.73 Ohms to tame it just a little. The guitar's sustain is incredible, largely due to the choice of wood.

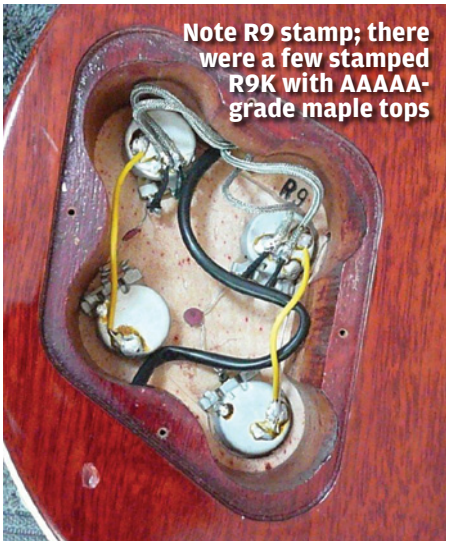
Control Cavity

Looking inside we find bumble bee caps, 500k pots and incredibly clean routing. The soldering is generous yet precise, with tidy wiring. As well as the five-digit number on the back of the headstock that begins with 9, the cavity is also branded with R9 where the wiring comes from the pickups and the Switchcraft toggle switch, possibly to indicate that this is not a genuine '59 Les Paul – but having played it after a set up, I could be possibly persuaded otherwise.

The Classic '57 bridge pickup is chimey and rich in harmonics, while the neck pickup is rich and has been slightly underwound to help tame the bass

Verdict

There has been a lot said about what makes a Les Paul sound great and it is definitely a combination of a large number of factors, and not just down to the pickup. Having played, repaired and serviced Les Pauls over many years and heard some great early '70s and not so great heavy late '70s, the quality can vary considerably in every decade of construction. In my opinion the finest details can make a difference, and that includes the subtle changes in sound when you take Kluson machineheads off and fit Grovers instead. But the thin lacquer found on the original ones goes a long way indeed to giving that magic combination to make a great Les Paul... and this is one of them.



Note R9 stamp; there were a few stamped R9K with AAAAA-grade maple tops

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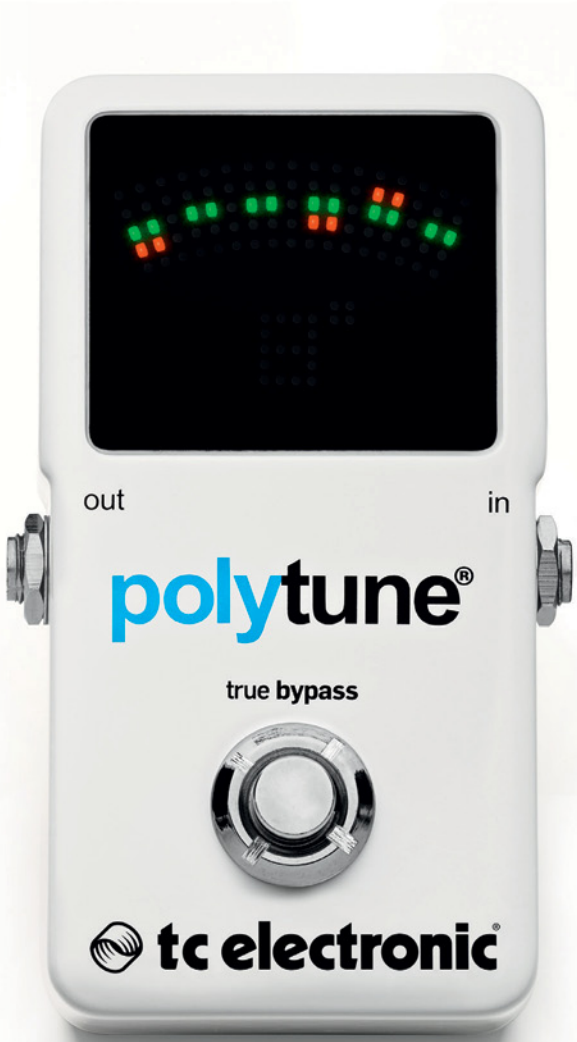

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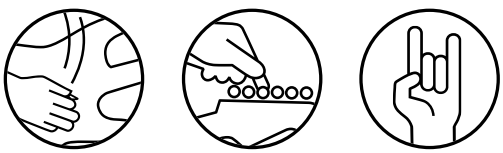

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THE BISHOP OF DENMARK STREET

BEHIND THE COUNTER CULTURE

This month **Sid Bishop** looks back to relate how he fell in love with rock'n'roll and how he ended up working a shop in Denmark Street in the '70s. Guitars, inevitably, are involved...

Rumours have reached my ears that there are some of you who are curious about my own guitar-related life beyond that of merely being a guitar dealer, so I'll place this month's vintage collecting article on a back burner just for now, and let you know how this all came to be in the first place.

Back in 1960, when I was around 14 years old, I found a guitar under my parent's bed. Scrabbling around under their bed wasn't something I habitually did, but at 14 you can be a bit adventurous, and I was curious about this funny-looking guitar case. There was no way I could have known at the time, but that single moment of discovery defined the direction of the rest of my life.

My father had been a guitarist in his younger days, playing in several big dance bands during the late '30s and through the war years. Sadly arthritis set in when he was still quite young, and by the early 1950s he'd abandoned his musical career and got a 'proper' job.

My first attempts to play this guitar, a real pig of a 1930s acoustic archtop jazz model made by the Michigan company, amounted initially to little more than random plucking and twanging. Wincing at this noise, my father agreed to teach me a few chords to set me on my way. I sat down and earnestly practised, trying to ignore the ball of agony which had once been my left hand. Much to dad's surprise (and mine) I took to the guitar quite enthusiastically, and persisted despite the pain.

Fast forward a couple of years, and by now I considered myself competent enough to get together with a couple of musically-minded friends from school and form a band. This we did, and my first-ever live performances were in a group called the Conchords which punctuated our end-of-term school plays and various parents evenings. We attempted to entertain our teachers and classmates with excruciating renditions of *Apache* and *Wipe Out*.

Not Sid's original guitars, but he moved through a Burns Jazz, a Gibson Firebird I and a Hofner Colorama. These examples are from '63, '64 and '63 again

'In my first band, the Conchords, we attempted to entertain our teachers and classmates with excruciating renditions of Apache and Wipe Out'

Over time, and with the assistance of several Muddy Waters and Howling Wolf records, my proficiency slowly improved, and I joined a string of progressively more capable bands doing bigger gigs. I was quite surprised to discover that sometimes I would actually get paid. Could this possibly be the life for me, I wondered?

As I got to be a better player, and became more knowledgeable, I got more selective about the equipment I used. Dad's old Michigan had long since proved inadequate, having first given way to a bright red Hofner Colorama, and by now I was now the proud owner of a Burns Shortscale Jazz and a Burns Orbit 60 amp, all obtained on hire purchase from Selmer's in Charing Cross Road. Furthermore I'd reached the stage when I instinctively knew when my playing sounded right, or indeed sounded terrible, though I didn't quite yet know the reasons why.

I was listening primarily to American blues musicians, British bands like the Yardbirds and the Stones, and I was soaking up as much of this stuff as I could. The raw sound of a blues guitar when played well flipped a switch somewhere inside my head, and I had determined that was the way to go. Of course there was only enough room in the world for one Jeff Beck, so slavishly copying him was pointless, but I could at least absorb much of what he did and evolve my own style.

As a result of responding to an ad in *Melody Maker* I joined the Social Deviants in 1967 (we later discontinued the 'Social' part). This was the start of my professional career, and I suddenly found myself launched into a whirlwind of major gigs, recording sessions, photo shoots, and all of the travelling around that went along with it. There's nothing that quite equals the sensation you feel when you first walk past WH Smith's and see your new LP in the window.

I felt that I needed to upgrade my equipment for my first truly pro band (you've at least got to look like you know what you're doing), so I augmented the Burns Orbit with a Vox AC30 to be used in tandem with it, and, naturally enough, a new guitar. I went to Pan Music in Wardour Street and bought a secondhand Gibson ES-335 for £129. It was a cherry '63 model, and I wish I still had it now. A Gibson just seemed to be the thing to have.

The 335 actually served me well during my two years with the Deviants, and delivered all that was required of it. It very quickly became apparent, however, that my amps fell somewhat short of delivering the brain-frying volumes that the Deviants required, and both were retired in favour of larger Triumph stacks. An ever-increasing demand for extra volume led eventually to my stage rig consisting of three 200W Marshall heads wired to no less than 16 4x12" cabinets. Perhaps, in retrospect, things had got just a little out of hand. ↔

Sid moved from a Vox AC30 to a frightening array of Marshall heads – and not regular ones, but Marshall Major 'Pigs' – plus an entire wall of cabinets

I also discovered that attempting to earn a livelihood as a professional guitarist was not without financial issues. Brief periods of having pots of money were regularly followed by weeks with none at all. By 1969 I was married, and with a child on the way. Situations would arise when I had to sell off equipment just to pay the bills, and the faithful 335 finally had to be sacrificed. I was henceforth reduced to borrowing a guitar for that night's gig, or going out to buy one which I would then resell immediately afterwards so I had at least some cash to take home to the wife. I bet Keef never had to go through that! The situation could not continue, and it looked like I was going to have to get a proper job.

One ideal way of maintaining continuity with the guitar that had become such an important part of my life was to get a job in a guitar shop, and that's how I ended up in Top Gear. Surrounded by guitars all day, and a regular weekly wage, too... problem solved.

My addiction to gigging didn't desert me entirely and very shortly after joining the shop I formed a greasy rock and roll band with some old mates. Restricting our gigs to about an hour or so's driving time from London so as not to impact on my daily work schedule seemed to be a sensible strategy, and I enjoyed the best of both worlds.

The rock and roll band, though loud by most standards, didn't quite require the sort of volumes that could be heard inside a nuclear bunker on a neighbouring planet, and I considered a Fender Dual Showman to be adequate, though in time I did add a second. Having found a 335 to be my perfect guitar during the Deviants days, I bought another, a sunburst '59 that had come into the shop on part exchange. This guitar is now owned by Bernie Marsden.

Being in the shop surrounded by guitars all day caused me to become infected with a serious case of GAS (Guitar Acquisition Syndrome), and as I was in the fortunate position of having a reasonable bank balance at that point, I started to collect a few. This being the mid-'70s, the hysteria that was to come regarding vintage guitar values hadn't quite yet raised its ugly head, and decent examples of used guitars were still relatively cheap, especially as I was allowed to buy them at shop cost price. My purchases included a '59 Fender Esquire, an ES-175, a '58 ES-350, a '63 Firebird I (later sold to Mick Ralphs) and several others, all of which have become valuable collector's items in the years since. Some I used on stage, but others never saw the light of day. I developed an avid interest in the history of these instruments, which led eventually to writing two books on Gibson's guitars. I consider myself fortunate to be still writing about guitars to this day, and especially these features for *Guitar & Bass*, though my retail career has long since ended.

Sid's Top Gear days led to a severe bout of guitar acquisition, including an ES-175 and various Gibson thinlines. Here's a '59 ES-175, a cherry '63 335, and a sunburst dot-neck '59 335

'By '69, with a child on the way, the 335 had to be sacrificed. I was reduced to borrowing guitars for gigs, or buying and immediately reselling one'

The guitar collection was gradually pruned down, such was the need of funds to provide for other more boring stuff... better cars and bigger houses, for example. I've never been the sort of player who developed a strong attachment to a specific guitar, as has, for example, Bruce Springsteen to his Telecaster, Tony Hicks and Joe Brown to their ES-345s, or the late Rory Gallagher to his Strat. I tend to hear things in my head, and feel them somewhere in my chest, and know exactly what I want to play. A guitar is simply the tool that enables me to do that, and it doesn't really matter too much what it happens to be, at least up to a point. For that reason I've never hung on to any guitar for very long – usually two or three years at the most.

The greasy band eventually ran out of steam, as bands always do, and I even went through a period when I didn't have a guitar in the house at all. I've recently been involved with a band who have just recorded a self-financed CD. At my age? I really should know better by now.

I'm confident that a lot of what I've written here will resonate with many of you reading this, and your own experiences may be similar. Life inevitably has its ups and downs, but the guitar has given me a focus when all around has been falling apart. I sincerely hope you have found it just as rewarding, and will continue to do so.

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Reverse Gear

Mikey Demus is the left-hooker riff merchant with dub metallers and festival favourites Skindred, and he's got a strong penchant for the soldering iron and the spraycan. Interview by Lars Mullen

'For most people, including guitar players, it's a right-handed world,' sighs Mikey Demus, guitarist with Skindred, purveyors of pulsating metal riffs mixed with infectious hip hop and reggae grooves. 'Only an estimated 10 or 15 per cent of us are lefties – but there are very few guitar shops stocking that proportion of left-handers.

'I'm a left-handed guitarist, and I'm left-footed too, but everything else that my body asks me to do is right-handed... for example, a knife and fork or holding a pen, so I suppose I'm a bit mixed up. My mum is left-handed and so is my dad, and I learnt guitar on his lefty, which to me seemed really natural.

'I wasn't sure if I was doing the right thing, but I read that the way to find out is to play air guitar for a while and see which feels right for you. It was a problem at school, though. There were a few of us who were leftie, and that was a time when the teachers were trying to get everyone to be right-handed, so I escaped the net. Saying that, my handwriting is crap, but playing left-handed has always felt cool to me.'

Skindred is a busy band – and it can be a very loud one. 'Yeah,' Mikey laughs, 'anyone who's seen us live will know we aren't the quietest. For a few years now I've been using Orange amplification. Not only is it awesome in the studio, but it really comes alive at festival gigs where I can have a big rig.

'At the UK's Sonisphere festival we thought we'd raise the bar a little visually with head-to-toe silver stage clothes and a load of black Orange cabs with silver-weave speaker cloth. I think we had something like 24 4x12" cabs and four 8x10's on stage, which was way cool, to say the least! My rig was powered by a tower of Rockerverb 100W MkII heads, which was awesome! Not every venue has room for that set-up, but my minimum rig is no less than four cabs. Some are black and some are the original Orange orange. Orange is also one of my favourite colours for guitars!'

Mikey has a variety of guitars for live work. Most are loaded with single coils, and with the amount of gain and volume he uses he finds it wise to run a noisegate on his pedalboard, like an ISP Decimator or a Boss Noise Suppressor. He never uses his amps' clean channels at all, preferring to stick to the dirty side but to control the gain via the guitar. This need for fingertip control has led him to become a keen guitar customiser.

'I can't leave them alone,' he admits. 'I've been taking things apart from an early age. Most of my guitars have had the electronics altered, especially the ones that I use live. I'm just a tinkerer... I'm always redesigning the wiring or changing the hardware. One of the best birthday presents I ever had was a really cool soldering iron. Not "cool" in that sense, but cool in that I can control the temperature so it doesn't fry anything it gets near. I just love that soldering iron...'

The choice and availability of guitars for left-handed players has now expanded somewhat thanks to the internet, but for Mikey, growing up in Wantage in Oxfordshire, the options were slim.

'It became a ritual, calling various guitar shops asking if they had any left-handed guitars in stock. It made me feel like an alien,' he sighs. 'When I was about 17, I struggled with a friend's Ibanez RG strung upside-down, and I used heavy strings which pulled

Left, Mikey's '05 Gibson SG Special; right, the original SG with added Dimebucker

everything out of place. The Floyd Rose was hard work that way round, and the controls got in the way. It was a nightmare when I think about it now. I eventually found a really nice white Mexican Strat, but that got stolen and I was heartbroken, so I took the plunge, got a bank loan and headed to Denmark Street with the intention of finding a decent left-handed guitar.

'I can't remember which shop it was now, but this one guy said he'd give me a sick deal on an SG Special complete with hard case – it was about a grand. So off I went, feeling really made up, until I found out that if I'd done a little more research I could have got the same package for about £600! But I've still got it and, you know, in hindsight it's become such a cool guitar. It's about 14 years old, it's covered in stickers, and it's been banged around the world on loads of tours.

'It's also the first guitar I modified. I'm not a fan of off-the-shelf guitars – the more worn they are the better, and I can't abide new shiny-feeling necks. The SG was mint until I started to install a Seymour Duncan Dimebucker at the bridge, and while adjusting the pickup height with a screwdriver that was far too big, I slipped and put a scratch right across the body! Ever since then I haven't been bothered what condition my guitars are in... that was the first and last time I tried to keep a guitar nice.

'A few of my guitars are still spotless, but in general they're all covered with tour-inflicted injures. As long as a guitar works, I'm not that fussed about the looks. It's only when things start to break or drop off that I get worried, although I have every faith in Jack Mackrill, my guitar tech, who has looked after my stuff for years now.

'I like to add things along the way, like the metal trussrod cover on the SG. You can also see on the face of the headstock how the lacquer is all cracked – that's from getting frozen to death in the hold of a plane then going back to a normal environment time after time. I think it looks cool.

'I have a similar black SG Special that dates from around 2005. I bought this one as a result of having a load of guitars stolen while we were touring America. Dan Pugsley, our bass player, had a couple of Music Man Stingray basses swiped and I lost a pair of Ernie Ball Axis Sports, which I'd been using to write and record the *Roots Rock Riot* album at the time.

'We both needed guitars pretty quick and as luck would have it our next gig was in Houston, Texas, where I knew of a cool shop called Southpaw Guitars that could fix me up. Luckily they had the 2005 SG Special, and having played the other one to death I knew what I was getting. All it needed was setting up for me – heavy strings, detuned to dropped A, a low action. They said they had a German in-house tech called Martin who could handle it with no problem, and true to form he was just amazing. He was the Terminator of guitar techs, born in a factory, I reckon – so we did the deal and were back rocking within 24 hours, and I got myself another SG.

'Needless to say, I've modified it to hell and back. It's pimped up with a Seymour Duncan JB humbucker at the bridge, a Pearly Gates at the neck, locking Sperzel tuners and TonePros nickel hardware, all of which improves it no end. All my guitars are strung with my 11-54 gauge signature Rotosound MD11 strings... they're perfect for heavy riffs and chugging chords.

'Soon after my Axis Sport guitars were stolen Ernie Ball sent me a pair of replacements and both of those have now been played to within an inch of their lives, as you can probably see. They're ace guitars from the ground upwards, and built by ace dudes. To me they feel a bit like a cross between a Telecaster and a Les Paul.

'Believe it or not I haven't done any modifications to the white one, which I requested with a matte finish and white humbuckers. I thought it had a kind of *Star Wars* stormtrooper look, so I added the AT-AT transfer, which looks like it grew there. I still use this one a lot in the studio.

'The other one they gave me came in high gloss black, but I chipped the crap out of it through doing loads of gigs and decided to scrape it right back with the intention of refinishing it with a funky paint job. But under the top coat was a really nice quilted maple top, so I've left in natural... well, at least for now!

'As I mentioned, Skindred are not a quiet band, far from it... but while subtleness is out the window, I ↔

Ernie Ball Music Man Axis Sports: one matte white, stormtrooper style, and one refinned in natural

ESP Eclipse and a stripped Les Paul Studio

Refinished Highway One Strat and a custom First Act (headstock detail right) with onboard siren!

am into finer shades of guitar tone and the differences between various woods. Having said that, I'm not that fussed if a guitar has a rosewood or maple fingerboard – anything is fine. I'm not a fan of ebony boards, although there is one on this ESP Eclipse. ESP sent me this a while ago, and it's never been gigged, so it's still pristine. As a left-handed model, it's pretty rare. It's a wonderful guitar with a really fast neck... a bit of a rock monster. I used this a lot on the 2011 album *Union Black*. It's a cool guitar and it lends itself very well to a dropped A# tuning.'

The next guitar, a Les Paul with a mysterious silver-grey look, is far from mint. 'I'd always had guitars that were pretty lightweight, but around 2006 someone suggested that I should try a heavy guitar like a Les Paul to get a certain sound for the *Roots Rock Riot* album. I asked our record label, which at the time was Atlantic, and they supplied a mint Les Paul Studio in see-through wine red. This was the dying days when labels still had budgets for bands!

'It wasn't long before I got itchy and started to change things around... fitting Seymour Duncan humbuckers, changing all the hardware to nickel, and rewiring it like the Jimmy Page Les Paul. I used it for gigs and on the *Shark Bites And Dog Fights* album, but it just didn't feel part of me. I put it on a stand and pondered about it for ages, and then decided "You're 'aving it, you're getting the Demus Touch". So I attacked it with a series of sanders and chemicals!

'I admit that it's sacrilege – there are players out there who would give there left ear for a guitar like this – but it wasn't a cool wine red, it was dull and looked insipid, so it had to go. The wood underneath wasn't that pretty, either, nothing like the maple under the black paint on the Ernie Ball. So far, it's turned into another of my ongoing projects without a foreseeable finish date. I start something then we go on tour for months or I'm locked in a studio, but I will complete it. I'm thinking of spraying it with some sort of graffiti orange artwork... maybe. We'll see!

'As I mentioned earlier, orange is one of my favourite colours, and I've sprayed several guitars at a buddy's recording studio – he had this spare room where I've refinished a lot of my stuff. I wasn't all that popular, as the paint got in the ventilation system while bands were recording. I must get a respirator of some sort next time... that nitrocellulose lacquer is scary shit! I was seeing wizards and dragons for weeks afterwards.

'I originally tried to spray my Highway One Strat in silver over the original colour, but it wouldn't take, so I stripped it back and attacked it with Capri Orange. I wanted black hardware, but apart from the tuners, black left-handed hardware isn't that easy to find, especially bridges... I'm still looking for one. This one is kept in dropped A and has a Seymour Duncan in the bridge and hot single coils. I'm gutted that they don't make this one any more. They came with massive frets and that large headstock which I love.

'The reddish-orange guitar next to it is a custom build by First Act with my initials at the 12th fret. They'd built some custom models for a buddy of mine who's in Nine Inch Nails, and he had a Fuzz Face installed in his, with a killswitch.

'I thought that was way cool, but I wanted something a little different that would fit in with the Skindred theme – and that was a dub siren, which is an effect built by a company called Dub Mekanix. The process involved researching a load of components and going back and forth with the Dub Mekanix people, who were great to work with.

'It took me a while to work out how to avoid having the whole body covered in knobs, and I got around that by using various slider switches, but they had to be in all the accessible areas of the body. At my request First Act installed my favourite Seymour Duncan JB and Pearly Gates humbuckers, and finished it in a great shade of orange. It's such a cool guitar. It's been on several ↦

'The EVH Wolfgang felt like somebody else's guitar until I sprayed it with all this gnarly orange paint. I always have to rat things up'

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Highway One Strat with Lace Sensors and a Mexican Strat with tattooist's graphic

Mexican Strat and a Fender Custom Shop Strat with Sperzels and hot pickups

albums now, and with the Dub Siren going at full tilt through an echo box, it sounds like a lost submarine!

'I thought I'd give the spray room a rest for the next project, and took up the "guitar at arm's length" position in my back garden and set about this EVH Wolfgang Special with a spray can. Insects were a bit of a problem. The company was great – they sent me two and I asked if I could personally customise this one, and they were cool about it.

'I love this guitar, it looks like it grew on me, and I used it all over the new album, *Kill The Power,* just released in the UK. The colour is a mixture of all the orange graffiti paint I could find, with a black burst. It looked okay brand new in white but it was a bit like somebody else's guitar. It always seems as if I have to rat things up to my own spec! I also sprayed the clenched fist, which is the new album's logo, which I designed. The other one is black and again has a Floyd Rose so I can do a few divebombs on the move. Add that to the Digitech Whammy I have on my pedalboards and it fits right in with our metal, punk, alternative rock and reggae stuff.'

Fender guitars are a big part of Mikey's sound, and he tends to switch between Strats and Teles; at the moment Teles see the most live use, so Strats are taking a back seat.

'Hendrix influenced me a lot, so I'm quite big on white Strats,' he explains. 'A lot have been modified. One of my favourite Fender mods is to rewire one of the tone controls as a second volume so I can vary the outputs, leaving enough lift on one of the pickups for a solo boost. This idea came as a necessity when I was using amps with just one channel. Nowadays I have all kinds of gear that'll do it for me, but it's a kind of habit, I guess.

'The first Strat started life as a 2009 Highway One. I've replaced the hardware, resprayed it and installed a set of these amazing Lace Hot Gold single coils with a high-output bridge pickup. The clarity is awesome, and their famed low noise is a bonus at the volume and high gain I use. This guitar was used for 99 per cent of the clean sounds on *Kill The Power* – the extra output is ideal for pushing the front end of an amp rather than letting the amp do the talking. I also have a set of Lace Nitro Hemi humbuckers, so it'll be time to get that soldering iron hot soon... although I may need another guitar to put them in.

'The Strat with the graphics is a Mexican Standard Strat which I bought in the US. The band went into a guitar store to buy a crate of drumsticks so I had a noodle on a few lefties and this one really stood out, so I bought it. I thought it looked a little plain, so when I got back to the UK I took it to a friend's tattoo shop called Sideshow in Hove and let them loose on the body.

'I really have a thing about white Strats. It's like leather jackets... I just can't stop buying them. I've got a white Mexican one which replaces the one I had stolen years ago, but this Custom Shop model, again in white, is the daddy. Fender built it to my specs with hot pickups, big frets, locking Sperzels and a worn neck. It's one of the rare guitars that stays at home or is used just in the studio.'

Next up is Mikey's absolute number one, the Ratocaster. 'Ha, now this is my baby,' he chortles. 'The Ratocaster is the epitome of all my mods and paint jobs rolled into one. It basically started life as Mexican Tele, and I replaced the neck with a Strat one that just slotted

The Ratocaster, left, and its backup, a Japanese Tele with a Strat neck

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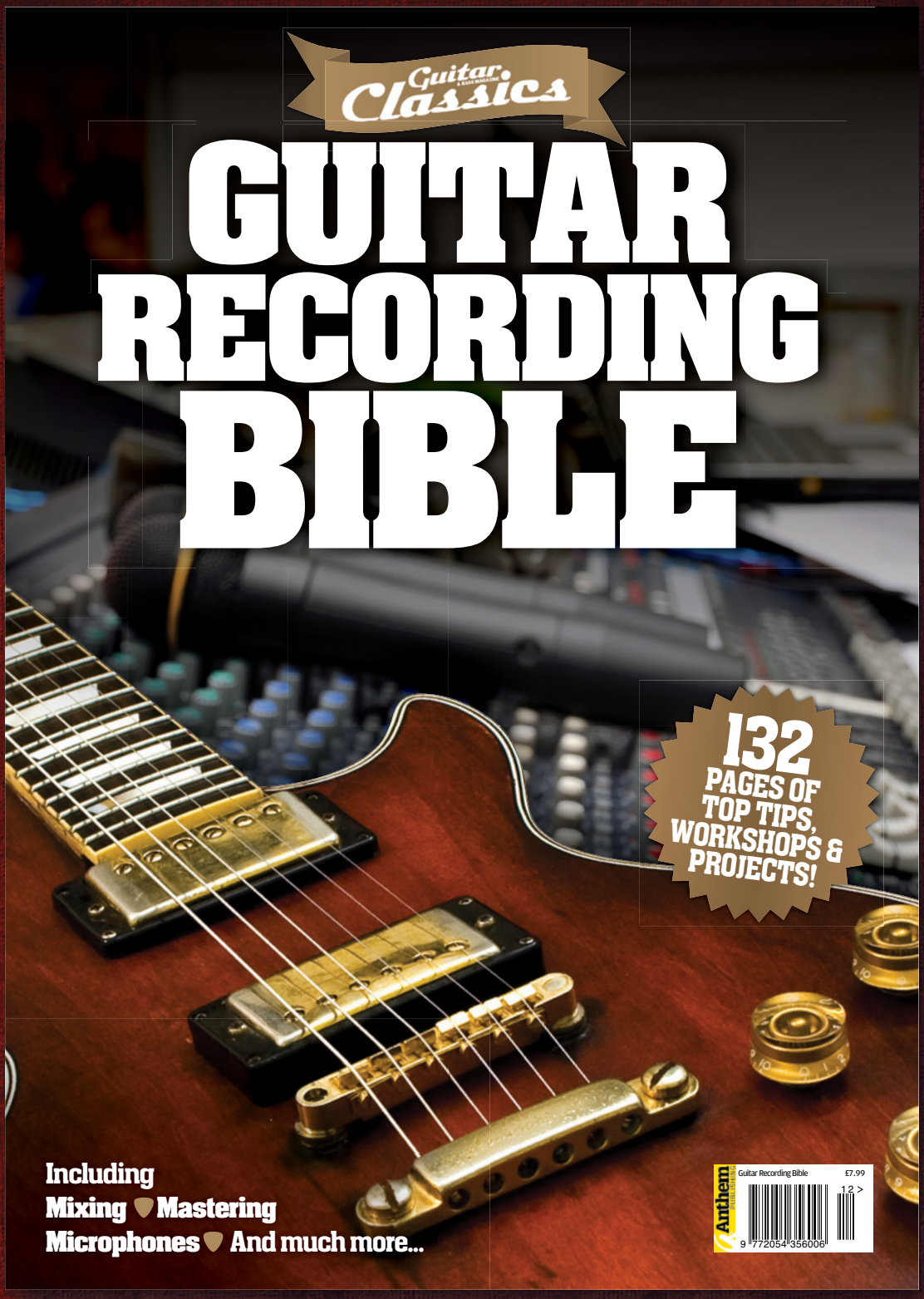

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in without any shims. Originally it was black, but I wanted to spray it silver for that Sonisphere gig. I had tried to paint a few Strats in silver before, but it usually ran everywhere as it wasn't real paint, just hooligan graffiti stuff – but it did stick to this Tele, which has now cracked and worn in quite a cool and arty way.

'I swapped the pickguard for a black one, fitted Seymour Duncan Hot Rails with dual volume controls, wired it up and it worked first time – and I've never looked back. It's been on all the albums, all the world tours, and pretty much to outer space and back. If Fender ever made a Mikey Demus Signature Telecaster, then this would be the one.

'There are some relic'ed guitars out there that to me just don't look right, but this is the real deal. I don't think there's any substitute for playing the crap out of a guitar for authenticity, and I've played this one literally every day for years.

'I also have a backup, a Japanese reissue with upgraded hardware and a Strat neck. At the moment it's still a fairly clean see-through white... but it probably won't be for long.'

Taking a momentary break from Fenders, we check out couple of humbucker-equipped guitars. 'When I first joined Skindred I didn't have that many guitars, and I needed a decent spare and had an inkling for a Les Paul Junior. Apart from not having that amount of cash, finding a left-handed model was hopeless. A friend suggested I check out the British maker Gordon-Smith.

Gordon-Smith GS-160 and a Washburn HB-35

Stock Fender Jazzmaster reissue and a G&L Legacy

'As it happened we were touring an area where I knew there was one for sale, so I made the truck swing by the shop and I bought this little single-pickup GS-160. It's got a coil-tapped humbucker and a brass nut, and that's about it – really simple, like an original Gibson, but it rocks like a good 'un... they're very underrated. It's built really well, and Gordon-Smith don't even charge extra for left-handers.

'I also needed a semi-acoustic for some recording. If anyone asks me what made me start playing the guitar, it would be seeing Jimi Hendrix with a white Strat at Woodstock, and – wait for it – Marty McFly playing *Johnny B Goode* on a Gibson 335 in *Back To The Future*. I couldn't really warrant having a proper 335 just sitting around, but at the time I was sponsored by Washburn, and they sent me this neat HB-35 in a nice see-through wine red, with a quilted maple top, bound body, bound neck and f-holes and split block inlays. Even though it has a centre block for the humbuckers it doesn't really like Skindred's super high-gain settings, but it's a great studio guitar when the need arises. I didn't like the gold hardware so I replaced that with nickel and installed the humbuckers that were in the stripped-down Les Paul. It's a cool guitar in its own right.'

So far a pristine Fender Jazzmaster has escaped the 'Demus touch'. 'This Japanese reissue also came from Southpaw, and this is the only one of my guitars that has thin vintage frets,' he explains. 'They seem to work okay on this guitar and it's really nice to play, but I normally hate that fret gauge. I've used it live quite a bit, especially on a song called *The Fear*.

'Like a lot of Jazzmaster players, I've changed the saddles; these are Graphtechs, and I've also installed Seymour Duncan Hot Jazzmaster pickups. I think the body is alder, and it has a great sound. For me having a Jazzmaster is a massive tip of the hat to Elvis Costello, who ➔

Ibanez RG with Floyd Rose

Manson MA1: 'I'm not sure if I'm cool enough to play it'

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Fender acoustic, a signature model for Rancid/Transplants guitarist Tim Armstrong

was another guitar hero for me. It was odd, really, as I grew up listening to various punk bands, but apart from the Sex Pistols I didn't know what half of them looked like. When I saw Elvis Costello, though, I was shocked that a guy who looked like that could be in such a cool band. You have to remember that when I was at school I had glasses and ginger hair... I was an über-geek!'

The sunburst guitar next to the Jazzmaster isn't a Fender, but a G&L. 'Here's another from Leo Fender's stable, an Indonesian-built G&L Legacy which was a present from my father in law, who bought it in Seaford Music in Seaford, Delaware on the east coast of the USA, and I have to say it's pure magic,' Mikey enthuses. 'It's totally stock and unmodified... how rare is that in my collection?! I can't say enough good things about this guitar; it's been faultless since the day it came out of the box, and the pickups are so cool. There's a song we wrote with Russ Ballard on *Kill The Power* called *We Live* where this guitar was used from start to finish. It just has this wicked chime, and it's loud.'

The black guitar Mikey's holding on the previous page is another British-built guitar, a Manson MA1. 'I really admire this brand because of the way they are building new guitars in this day and age – they look cool, and they sound awesome,' Mikey says. 'This one has a mirror scratchplate, a matt finish and no neck position markers, and this time the looks instantly make it feel like it's my guitar and not someone else's. It's super, super cool... in fact, I'm still not sure if I'm cool enough to be playing it. With a P90 at the neck and a humbucker at the bridge, it covers just about every need. I won't be leaving the Teles behind, but I'll certainly be using Manson guitars live now.'

This is one man not averse to using another player's signature model, if it feels right – and one that does is a single-pickup Ibanez ORM1WH. 'This is so pretty,' praises Mikey. 'It's the signature guitar for Omar Rodriguez-Lopez, the Mars Volta guitarist. It's from the same stable as the Jet King, with a similar body shape, tailpiece and retro scratchplates. It's got a really fast neck, and like the Gordon-Smith it couldn't be any more basic when it comes to the electronics, with just a single volume control and a Seymour Duncan Hot Rail at the bridge. It's wicked, really, and because it's quite small I use it a lot as a travel guitar and for warming up on the tour bus. The only other Ibanez I have is an RG model. I was desperate to write and record some riffs with a Floyd Rose for *Kill The Power*. This one was set up perfectly for me before they sent it, and I just couldn't put it down – I played it for days. There's nothing subtle about this one, it's just built to rock. A lot of Skindred riffs were born on this guitar.

'I have a left-handed USA Fender Jazz Bass which is invaluable when it comes to finishing up putting a song together at home. I've sprayed the scratchplate black. I use it a lot but I find that after a few hours it feels like the tendons in my fingers are getting ripped out. I have a million percent extra kudos for Dan for the physical input he delivers as Skindred's bassist.'

Nearly every songwriter has an acoustic or two for those quieter inspirational moments. 'Writing in Skindred is a joint effort,' says Mikey.

'After playing bass for a few hours I feel like my tendons are being ripped out. A million percent extra kudos to Dan, our bassist'

'We all bring ideas and riff to the table. I have two acoustic guitars: this little Fender Tim Armstrong signature plays a big part in my writing and it looks great with the Hellcat position markers and the concert-size mahogany body with a satin finish. The other is this Taylor Big Baby. I was doing some demo'ing for Orange at PMT in Birmingham and during the day I played on every left-handed model Taylor had, and I was so impressed that I bought it there and then.

'I'd shut myself in the acoustic booth when this black geezer came in, a real cool rude boy with a porkpie hat, and he picked up a classical nylon-strung guitar and we started jamming. I was playing all this bluesy reggae stuff, like a mix of Robert Johnson and Dennis Brown, and he's playing a mix of Paganini and Metallica... it was so surreal! That's what I like about music and my band and my guitars. It doesn't matter what you are about – music always unites people.'

For more information on Mikey Demus and Skindred visit www.skindred.net

Ibanez ORM1WH, the Omar Rodriguez-Lopez model

Taylor Big Baby and a USA Fender Jazz Bass

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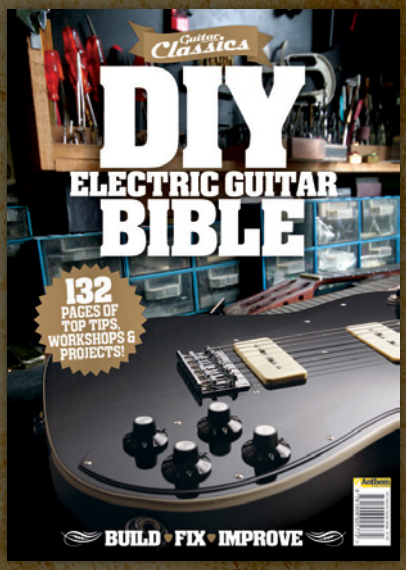

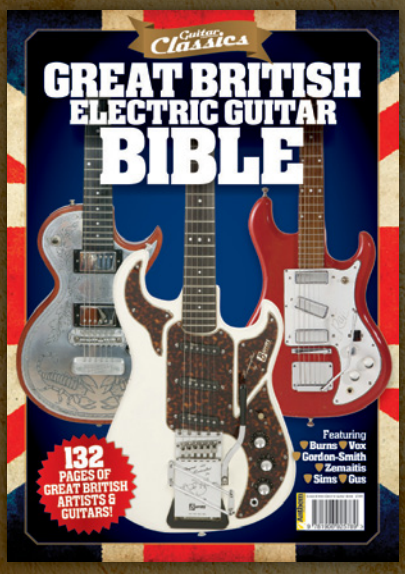

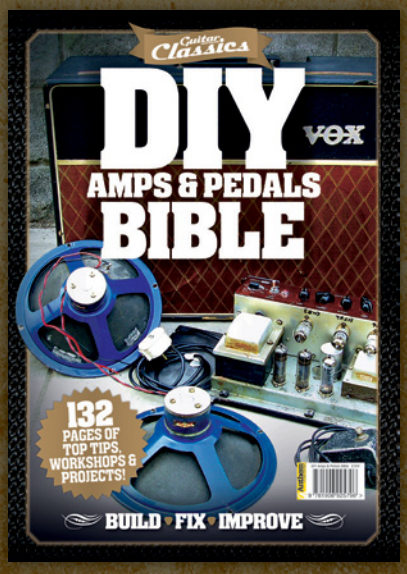

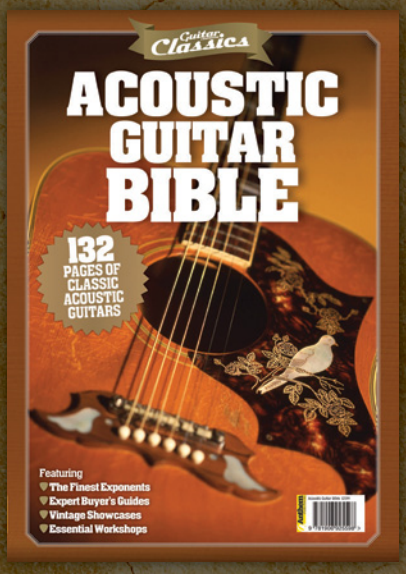

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Meter Reader

Now that you're troubleshooting and soldering like a pro, the final part of our electronics for beginners series looks at the hallowed multimeter, a near-essential piece of kit for the serious DIY dabbler...

Although a multimeter, or multitester, is capable of taking many different types of electronic measurement, only two are usually required by guitar repairers: resistance and DC voltage. AC voltage readings are certainly possible with a multimeter; mains checking an extension lead, for example, is possible with the 250V AC range. However, these measurements are potentially lethal and should you intend to use a multimeter for this purpose, do take time to read the instructions carefully – high voltage AC seldom takes prisoners, and when we say you can kill yourself by doing such work wrongly, we mean it... so be warned!

Now, back to the safe world of meter functions within the electric guitar itself. Of the two that concern us, DC resistance will prove the most useful, allowing us to measure the resistance of a component – a pickup coil or volume pot – and thereby check that it's working properly. The DC resistance 'ranges' on a multimeter can also be used to make 'zero ohm' continuity checks of wire linkages and dry solder joints.

ZERO AND COUNTING

Analogue needle-type meters need to be adjusted or 'zeroed' before making any measurements. This is usually achieved by turning a small trimpot or adjuster wheel on the front or side of the meter. Every time you select a resistance range, hold the probes together and turn the ohm (Ω) adjuster so that the needle lines up with the zero on the scale. This adjustment zeros the meter and ensures accurate readings.

CONTINUITY TESTING

Continuity checking is very useful and very simple to do. Set your meter to a fairly sensitive range – Rx100, for example – and then zero the needle. When the probes are touched together, the needle will move from the left to the right. It needs to settle on 0, as previously explained; in this condition the meter is measuring the resistance between the two probes as 0Ω on the scale. If you were to join the probes via a short length of wire the meter would also read zero because the wire has little or no electrical resistance. This state of affairs only exists because the wire is short and the meter fairly insensitive. However, if the length of wire increases dramatically (as in the case of a pickup coil) then the resistance will increase and become measurable by the meter.

Good solder joints and connecting wires have no electrical resistance so they should return a 0Ω reading on the scale when tested by the meter; if the reading shows any resistance at all then you have found a fault, perhaps even the fault. Hurrah!

USING A MULTIMETER TO TEST A GUITAR'S EARTH

In the January issue of *G&B* we looked at how a faulty string earth can upset a guitar's screening and cause the dreaded hands-off buzz. As the string earth is merely a wire which joins the earth side of the pickup

You can check a guitar for a bad earth connection by placing one pole of the multimeter on the strings and the other on the output socket nut

circuitry to the bridge, it should be possible to test its continuity with the meter from outside the instrument. Placing one probe on the strings and the other on the output socket nut does the trick, testing most, if not all, of the instrument's earth plane in one hit. If the meter needle moves to 0, then the earth plane is 100 per cent; if the needle reads any resistance at all, you know that the earth side of the circuitry has one or more dodgy connections; if the needle refuses to move then you can be sure that there is a break in the earth circuit somewhere. Continuity checking can therefore detect three conditions: good connection, poor connection, and no connection at all. Handy, huh?

RESISTANCE READING

Although the measurement scales on an analogue needle-type multimeter look confusing, they needn't be if you follow this simple rule. First, look for the ohms range on the meter's face – usually the one on the outer edge of the scale – and see how the number 10 appears around the middle. If the needle were to point to that 10, and the range switch was set to Rx100, then the scale reading (10) is multiplied by 100; the actual measurement then equals 1000Ω or 1kΩ. So whatever you were measuring between the probes would have a reading of 1kΩ. On this scale a 6kΩ Stratocaster pickup would send the needle to settle somewhere between the 50 and the 100 further up the scale.

If the range switch is moved to Rx1k then the 10 becomes 10 x 1000 which equals 10,000Ω or 10kΩ. On this scale, that Strat pickup settles the needle down the scale between the 5 and the 10.

It is much easier to read the meter scale with the range set to Rx1KΩ than Rx100 as the scale is less cramped and therefore the divisions are easier to read.

If the range is changed again to Rx10K the 10 on the scale becomes 10 x 10,000, which equals 100,000Ω or 100kΩ. This setting would be useful for measuring the resistance of a volume or tone pot, both its total track resistance and the behaviour of the wiper. A 500kΩ pot would send the needle up the scale to settle on or near 50. The accuracy of each of these tests is dependant, of course, on how carefully you have zeroed the meter and your ability to read the scale.

GOING DIGITAL

In theory, digital meters remove the 'tricky-to-read' measurement scale and replace it with a numeric LCD read out, often with two or more decimal places. The only thing to remember is that a digital meter will take a little while to settle on a value, so make sure that you don't read them too quickly. The range selector operates in the same way as with the needle-type meter, so a digital meter can be used for both continuity and resistance readings in exactly the same way as outlined for an analogue meter. Most digital meters will auto-zero and auto-range themselves, so read the manual first to find out just how clever your unit is!

The DC ranges on both types of meter measure voltage and current, which is useful when trouble-shooting active circuits in guitars and stompboxes. Some meters also offer great 'battery test' ranges which put a load of a few milliamps on the battery to simulate a circuit before they measure the voltage. These ranges can tell whether a battery is fit for either the gig or the bin.

That draws to a close our look at the basic techniques involved in guitar electronics. If we've whetted your appetite, there are various books – available in good guitar shops – dedicated to the subject from which you can learn a lot more. Donald Brosnac's *Guitar Electronics* is now quite old but still a good reference guide; likewise Adrian Legg's *Customising Your Electric Guitar*. Dan Erlewine's *Guitar Player Repair Guide* is a tome of professional-aimed information that includes electronics, while Dave Burrluck's *The Player's Guide To Guitar Maintenance* is an excellent starting point. Knowledge is power – so keep learning, and work safely.

Top Nut & Tales

A nut is so much more than a bit of plastic: alternative materials often make a huge difference, and an expert replacement can transform a guitar

Experienced guitar repairers have many tricks up their sleeve to get that extra ounce of performance out of an instrument. As you'll have twigged by now, the standard of set-up given to most new guitars is, unfortunately, generally low. Budget instruments in particular are often hurriedly thrown together to keep costs down and production rates up. This may be frustrating for the musician, but it does mean that first guitars can be affordable – and in most cases the instrument can be later worked on by a pro repairer to iron out the nastier foibles.

In general, problems on affordable guitars tend to arise because although the hardware – bridge, tuners, top nut, pickups, electronics and so on – may look identical to that on a guitar costing 10 times the price, in reality it lacks the degree of engineering of the components it sets out to emulate.

Cheaper Strat-type single-coil pickups, for example, often use one or two ceramic magnets underneath six steel polepieces to power the pickup. Although the pickup works fine and reliably with a reasonable output, the sound quality is often on the 'scratchy' side... and not very musical. Again, cost is the culprit. Ceramic magnets are very cheap, alnico magnets – used on more musical single-coils – are more expensive; and when you're trying to make a guitar that'll retail under £200, every penny counts.

THE NUT

Another example is the nut, which on cheaper guitars is more often than not a mass-produced one-size-fits-all moulded item. The material used for the top nut actually plays a very important role in tailoring the sound of the guitar. Nylon-like plastic – as used on the worst moulded top nuts – is just not up to the job; often you'll even find nuts which, when you lift them out and turn them over, are hollow underneath. As it's universally agreed that the top nut (and, on acoustics, the bridge saddle) should be made from a constantly dense material if the instrument is to have any strength of musical voice, these sham nuts are ludicrous.

Fitting a replacement nut is tricky and requires specialist tools and time-consuming precision work, so it's worth choosing the right material

Traditionally, a guitar's nut was made of either bone or ivory. Times and attitudes change, though, and nowadays there are synthetic substitutes which can replace these natural materials. ABS plastic is very popular; it's extremely dense, easily and accurately workable with a saw or file, while molecularly it's very consistent and only mildly porous, making it physically – if not sonically – a better material than either ivory or bone. However, ABS's extreme density makes it brittle and it has trouble withstanding knocks and bashes without cracking or splintering. To counter this fragility, chemical industry boffins have developed other plastics to emulate bone and ivory such as Corian, Micarta, Tusq and even clever graphite-impregnated variations specially designed for vibrato-equipped divebombers (see *Bad To The Bone: Nut Materials* on the opposite page).

Choosing the right material for your guitar is something to discuss with your repairer, as sonic differences between materials is quite marked. Supplying and fitting a replacement nut requires time-consuming precision work, so it's worth getting the material right first time. Replacing your nut is tricky and requires some highly specialised tools, so it's really a job best left to a pro repairer. Nuts do wear out; the strings slots eventually become too deep, making the strings rattle against the first few frets. In dire circumstances low string slots can cause the frets to wear into gullies that run directly under each string. Unfortunately the only way out of this predicament is to replace the nut and refret

BAD TO THE BONE: NUT MATERIALS

IVORY
It isn't exactly the most PC of choices these days unless it's been pulled out of an iceberg, yet it's still regarded as the best material for the job, particularly on acoustic instruments. Ivory, unfortunately, does it all; it cuts easily and can be polished to a high gloss, it's robust enough to withstand knocks and bangs, and has a high degree of natural slippiness. Sonically it has a flat, even response across the frequency range of a guitar and thanks to its high density it produces a pleasantly bright musical voice.

TUSQ
Made by GraphTech, this stuff has been standard issue on many guitars for years. It also looks and sounds pretty much like ivory, which is enough for most people. Highly recommended, and not expensive.

BONE
Used on many high-end guitars, bone is currently the most popular alternative to ivory. The major difference is colour, both 'new' and after ageing. Recommended for all guitars, new or vintage.

MICARTA
An excellent synthetic ivory/bone substitute, used on CF Martin guitars. It cuts and polishes well, but it's a little softer than bone. Sonically it gives a uniform tone across the strings, although many feel it's not quite as bright-sounding as bone. Available in both yellowy-white and black, Micarta is good stuff – not least because it's very affordable.

CORIAN
A fairly new material with the lock and hardness of bone, plus greater density. It cuts well and can be polished to a luscious sheen. Sonically it produces a bright and regular tone across the strings. Recommended, particularly for acoustic guitars.

ABS
A dense 'no-grain' plastic, and a good starting point with a pleasant tone and off-white colour. It can sound brittle, though.

GRAPHITE
Graphite top nuts are actually a cunning plastic and graphite mix that makes for remarkably friction-free nut slots – just the job for tremolo players who hate locking nuts. Ideal for slippery tasks.

MOTHER OF PEARL
Often used on very expensive hand-built banjos and mandolins. It cuts well, looks dazzling when polished and produces a tone that's very bright, but not harsh. MOP is extremely dense and thus tends to be brittle, but if you look after it you can really turbocharge the treble content of your guitar. MOP top nuts for bottleneck slide players sound very cool indeed. Recommended, but tricky to live with.

METAL
Although the heyday of metal nuts was in the 'heavy is best' days of the late '70s and early '80s, a number of makers still swear by them. Gordon-Smith, for instance, still fit brass nuts to their guitars; other common materials include aluminium, stainless steel and nickel silver. The sound of metal nuts tends to be more middly, with an increase in instrument resonance; the only drawback is friction, and great care must be taken to smooth the nut slots.

the guitar – expensive and unnecessary. Of course, you may just decide to replace the nut because you've read this article and discovered that a moulded horror is strangling the tone of your strings at birth. Whatever your reason, discuss the problem with a good repairer and also consider the subject of string spacing,

STRING SPACING
String spacing isn't just the physical distance between each adjacent string, it's also the distance between the outer strings and the edge of the fingerboard – a factor which plays a dramatic part in the overall feel of your guitar. The actual amount you can widen your string spacing is determined by the design of your guitar. Necks with no edge binding tend to have a fairly sharp angle to the fret ends, so that the amount of fret available to play on is nice and wide; conversely, if the fret ends have been heavily dressed or if your guitar has the kind of bound fingerboard edges where the frets stop before the binding starts, your potential playing area will be less.

The primarily danger of widening the string spacing is that the top E string can pop off the edge of the board when playing first position chords or hammer-ons and pull-offs. However, a skilled repairer can often widen the string spacing by moving strings 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 along, retaining the top string's original position – a modification which can sometimes breath fresh air into a guitar that has a cramped first fret feel. A new, freshly cut top nut can make the world of difference to any guitar.

Got one of these? Skip this article!

Aluminium nut on a Danelectro

GUITAR TECHNIQUES
WORKSHOP

Rhythm Schmythm

It's time to continue our exploration into the marvellous world of klezmer guitar playing, so fire up your metronomes and get your wrists flailing; it's rhythm time!

Last month, we looked at the melodic side of klezmer music; this time, we're going to delve into the equally important aspect of rhythm playing. This side of the music is particularly enjoyable, and you'll find that you can get a lot of frustration out of your system doing some frenetic rhythm guitar.

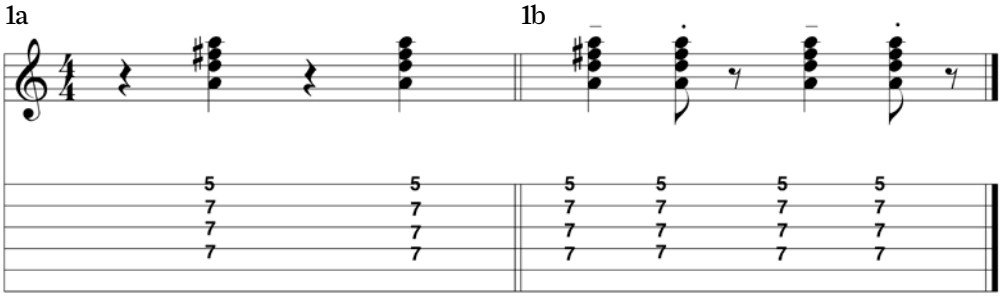
Klezmer music is primarily dance music, so the groove has to be seriously tight. Interaction between the guitar and bass (and drums, if any are used) is extremely important. In the band Shir we have no drummer, so the rhythm section comprises simply guitar and bass. I sometimes imagine myself behind a kit and try to transfer drum-like fills and percussive nuances into my playing. Of course, I'm listening to the solo instruments and trying to help and complement them by inserting percussive riffs into the groove. When you're one half of the rhythm section you have a very big responsibility towards the band because if you fail, the whole band fails.

Klezmer music has assimilated everything from Romanian music to jazz and is just one form of the myriad styles which fall under the complex and much-derided term of 'world music'. All of these forms have much to offer and even if you just scratch the surface you will learn something new that can be stolen and imported into your own music, potentially making it that little bit different. Don't limit yourself. As the great klezmerist Lobachevski once said: 'Plagiarise! Let no one else's work evade your eyes.'

1 SIMPLE RHYTHMS — 4/4 TIME

The simplest rhythm is a straight 'oom-pah' beat in 2/4 or 4/4 where the bass and guitar are alternating, bass on beats one and two (playing roots and fifths) and guitar on the off-beats, two and four. At ultra-fast tempos, the bass will play on the down-beats (one, two, three and four) while the guitar plays the eighth-note up-beats in between.

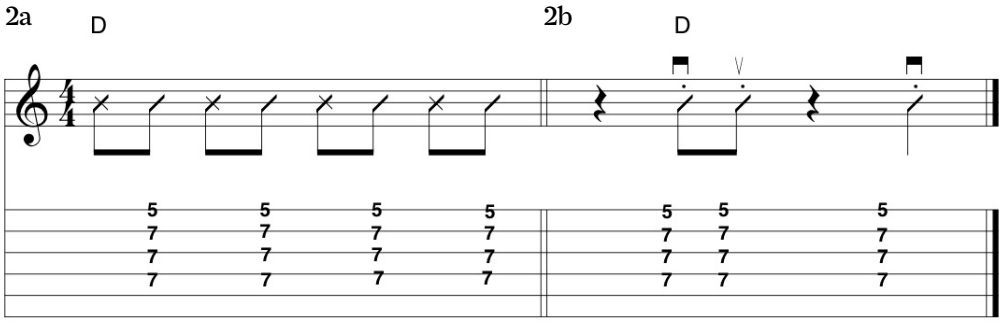
Exercise 1a is a simple rhythm, one of several forms of 'hora', and is found all over eastern Europe and comes from the 'friss', which is the fast part of the chardish melody from Hungary. Klezmer uses this at various tempos, from ultra-slow (50 bpm) to ultra-fast (as fast as we can go), sometimes within the same tune. The change in tempo will usually take place on the repeat of the tune and a tune could be played three, four or five times through, with each melody getting faster or even doubling the feel, causing the dancers to reach that state of ecstasy commonly termed 'apeshit'. From slow tempos up until around 145 bpm, I tend to use all eighth-note downstrokes, either with the left-hand muting the on-beats (by lifting the fingers slightly but not completely off the strings, releasing them) as in Exercise 1, or by playing quiet and long strums on the beat (with the bass) and short, staccato off-beats (which are, after all, the important notes) as in Exercise 1b.



2 FASTER RHYTHMS — 4/4 TIME

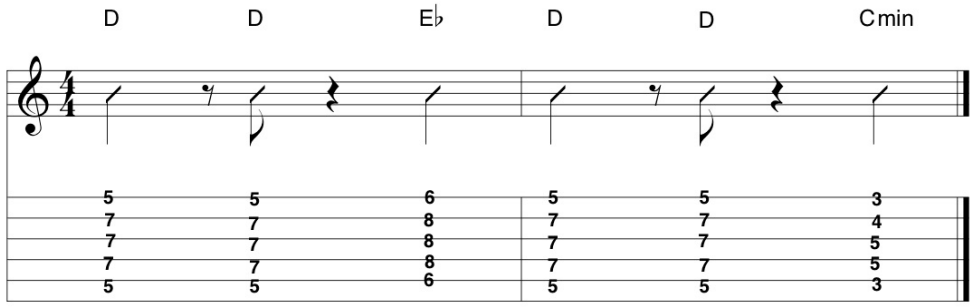
At faster tempos I switch to a simpler down-up strumming pattern, muting the downstrokes with the left hand, as in Exercise 2a. My right arm is always moving in rhythm, even when the plectrum is not hitting the strings. This gets the whole body into the groove. I try not to change to the down-up strumming until it is really necessary; the strain of playing constant downstrokes at a fast tempo adds excitement and urgency to the music. Try playing this with a bass player (or a metronome) playing the on-beats while you play the off-beats. Then try doubling the tempo. This may sound easy but remember, you have to keep a very tight groove, which is anything but easy at slower tempos, and not let it slip for a moment at any speed, especially when you are presiding over a floor full of exuberant dancers. Personally, I love this kind of rhythm playing. It's not complicated but it is very physical, and you know when you've done a set of this. It's similar to the strumming style you'll hear on Django Reinhardt's Hot Club band, especially the sans-drummer version. Their style was a mixture of gypsy and jazz, and the eastern European influence is evident in both their music and Klezmer.

At a slower tempo, with a little variation on beat two, this can sound almost like reggae, a style which also uses the guitar on the off-beat, as in Exercise 2b.



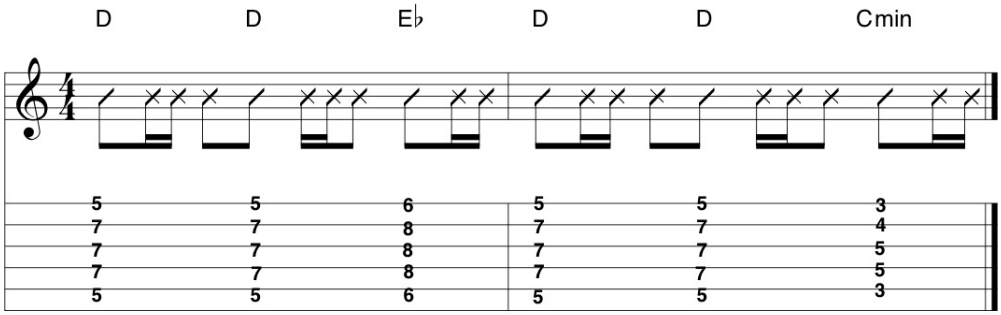
3 BULGAR BEAT — 4/4 TIME

Another widely used rhythm in klezmer is the 'bulgar' whose source is probably more Middle Eastern. It is usually played at a medium tempo and is one of the few klezmer rhythms that tends to stay at the same tempo throughout the piece. Exercise 3 is a good example of this, where the eighth notes in the bar of 4/4 are divided into groups of 3-3-2, with an emphasis on the first beat of each group like so: 123 123 12. This tends to make it sound almost like an odd-time signature or even a triplet figure, but it isn't. Count the eighth-notes in the exercise as you play them and you'll see, or even hear, what I mean. I tend to prefer eighth-note downstrokes for this feel at most tempos, or just downstrokes on the emphasised beats, although both down and upstrokes can be used and will give the music a more laidback feel. Also try muting the unemphasised beats, or even occasionally including them, for variation. The bass should be playing pretty much the same pattern so you'll be locked in together as opposed to alternating, as in the previous rhythm.



4 MUTED IN BETWEEN NOTES — 4/4 TIME

By using eighth-note downstrokes (and therefore, of course, sixteenth-note down/up strokes) you can use the muted in between notes to create percussive fills, as in our final example, Exercise 4. The harmony used for tunes in this rhythm is often a phrygian sound; D to Eb, or D to Cmin, for example. This, together with the bulgar rhythm, creates a great sense of tension.



GUITAR TECHNIQUES
WORKSHOP

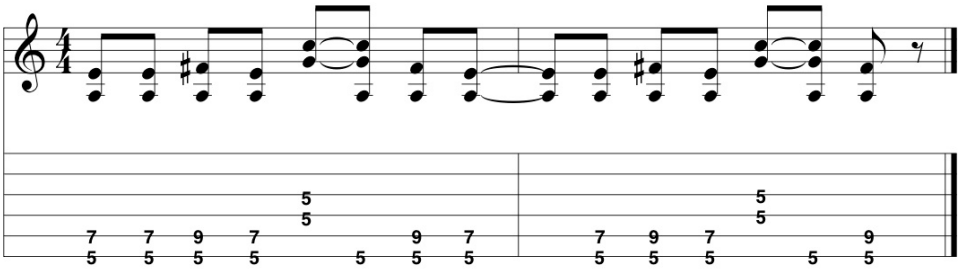
Mix'n'Match

Rock'n'roll rhythm guitar is an essential bedrock style for the well-rounded guitar slinger. Join us as we look at some classic moves and add a few possibilities that open the creative gates

Rock'n'roll in its various guises can generally be thought of as the marriage of country and blues – but having said that, rhythm and blues, jazz and skiffle also made hugely important contributors to the style. So, while you had Chuck Berry doing uptempo blues, Bill Haley was more influenced by jazz and country, and Gene Vincent and Elvis Presley had more of an R'n'B and country flavour. All of them, however, were rock'n'rollers and were, in their turn, a huge influence on their rock successors – from Jimi Hendrix and the Beatles right up to the present day. So let's look at some of those early moves...

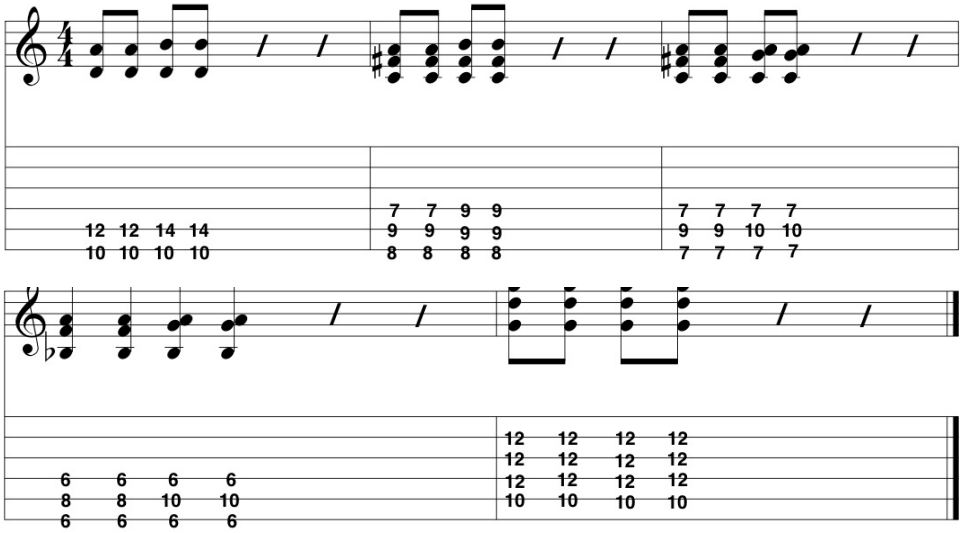
1 BACK TO THE FUTURE — 4/4 TIME

Exercise 1 is the basic *Johnny B Goode* riff, as used by Chuck Berry – and Jimi Hendrix – but here we've given it a minor third for a more Beatlesy flavour. Play the sixth fret on the G string instead of the fifth for the major. By simply shifting the action to the next set of strings – ADGB – it's easy to accomplish a satisfying change to the fourth, ie D in the same position. As you should now see, it's our basic blues riff, but at a faster tempo, hence the soubriquet 'rhythm and blues'. All the notes should be played as downstrokes, and the riff can be renewed by playing an Ab and Eb (a semitone below the root) on the last eighth-note of the previous bar. Try it with a shuffle or swing feel as well. It makes an interesting comparison with the classic Ian Dury and the Blockheads tune, *What A Waste*. The chorus employs the rock'n'roll riff, but rather than using the customary I, IV and V chords (D, G and A), it takes a more chromatic approach.



2 RIFF WITH DESCENDING BASS — 4/4 TIME

Exercise 2 is a similarly chromatic invention that, rather than ascending, like *What A Waste*, descends in the bass. It's only one of many possibilities, but here we're using the R&B/ rock'n'roll groove, not only on the sixth and flattened sixth of the key (as opposed to the usual one, four and five), but also a chord rooted, not on the one, but on its flat seventh (the second chord is a D7 with a C bass note). This is where arrangement and songwriting get interesting; you can play chords not only on their root notes, but also on their sevenths or any other notes that make up the chord, ie the first, third, fifth or seventh (not to mention the ninth and the fourth). Try getting your bass player to play the odd third, fifth or seventh instead of the root. More about this later. Play each of the first three bars twice.



3 ROCK'N'ROLL RIFF

4/4 TIME

Exercise 3 is another type of R'n'B-based rock'n'roll riff. This technique of combining a single-note riff with the odd chord thrown in is extremely effective and easy to execute. Try replacing the first quarter-note of the bar with two eighth-notes every other time. Have a go at playing this riff through an entire 12-bar pattern. If you hadn't already realised, this riff is based on an A7 chord.

4 COUNTRY MOVES

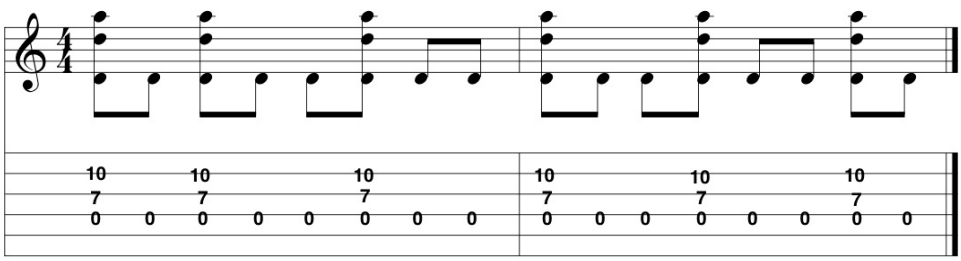
4/4 TIME

Exercise 4 is more of a country-influenced rock'n'roll style of the kind you might hear played by Cliff Gallup (from Gene Vincent's band) or Scotty Moore (Elvis Presley). Using a pick and two fingers you can achieve the bounce of an alternating bass at a higher tempo than most country, and with more blues in the harmony – play the E on the D string, in the chord, with the lick. Try alternating every other second bar with a pentatonic lick in the open E position. You'll want a fairly twangy tone, too, middle or bridge pickup, perhaps played on an old Gretsch semi-acoustic, if you happen to have one knocking around. You can carry the feel through to the A, as shown; try an open position B7 as well. For an authentic ending, an E6sus2 in the 11th position (as bracketed) should do the trick.

5 ROCK'N'ROLL TO ROCK

4/4 TIME

As rock developed, players started to abandon the sometimes cumbersome movement of the root and fifth to the root and sixth in favour of retaining the thrust of the eighth-note rhythm, while varying the accents in the bar. Exercise 5 is in the style of Steve Stevens from Billy Idol's band. It's a rhythm part that accents the first, third and sixth eighth-notes of the first bar, and the first, fourth and seventh eighth-notes of the second bar. Try just playing the accents on a single note or chord as a useful exercise. This exercise will test your control over the velocity with which you attack the strings – one of the things which makes the difference between an average and a really good player. Why not change the root notes every couple of bars? Try this sequence; D, G, B and A. By playing the D and A on the G and B strings you should find that you have good access to the bass notes, while being able to mute unwanted strings (you might want to play the B with your thumb, though). For the right sort of intensity, play with downstrokes and use a fairly distorted sound. Try varying the accents.



DRILLS FOR
THRILLS

Audio Visual

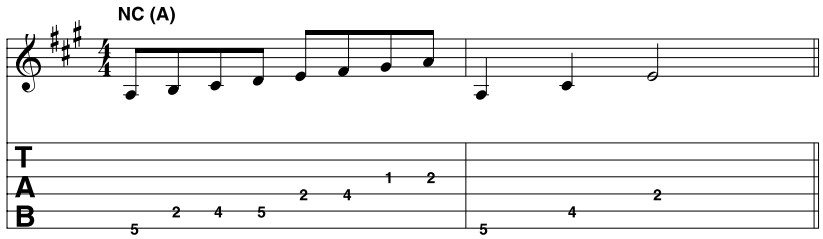
Get your head round these 'visualisation' techniques and unlock that fingerboard

Previous drills have been largely based on physical playing techniques, with exercises on how to develop them or ones concerned with ear training. The workout this month is largely 'mental' rather than physical or aural, and concerns triads; in musical terms a triad is a three-note chord consisting of the root, third and fifth. Specifically, the approach we're outlining requires being able to visualise triad shapes across, as well as up and down the fretboard. The end result should be a better knowledge of the fretboard and will also hopefully inspire new ideas and approaches to improvising. Since these exercises potentially cover a wide fretboard range, they are best played on an electric guitar.

1 A MAJOR TRIAD

4/4 TIME

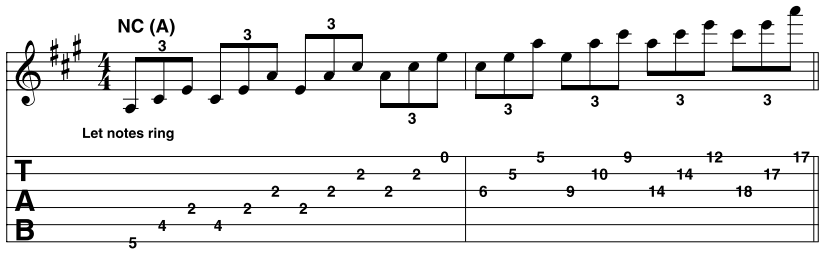
The first bar of this exercise shows a one-octave A major scale in the second position. This means that the first finger is at the fifth fret, and since the fretting hand fingers are generally kept spread out one finger per fret, this automatically determines which frets the other fingers are poised above. In order to reach the G# note on the fourth beat, a temporary change to the first position is required for just half a beat. The second bar of the exercise isolates the root (or first note), the third and the fifth notes of the scale, thus giving a root position A major triad in arpeggio form (that is, the notes are played one at a time rather than as in a chord).



2 INVERSIONS

4/4 TIME

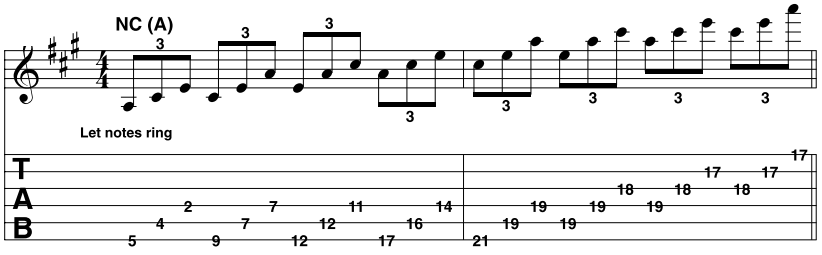
The fact that the triad contains three notes lends itself naturally to triplets. Starting with the root position triad from the first beat of bar 2 of Ex 1, the lowest note, A, is transposed up an octave so the order of the notes on the second beat is third, fifth, root – aka the 'first inversion', with the third at the bottom. For the next beat the lowest note is transposed an octave higher again so the order of notes is fifth, root, third – a 'second inversion', with the fifth at the bottom. Then, for the fourth beat, the lowest note is again transposed an octave higher, so the order is root, third and fifth – another root position triad, but an octave higher than the one on the first beat of the bar.



3 MOVING UP THE FRETBOARD

4/4 TIME

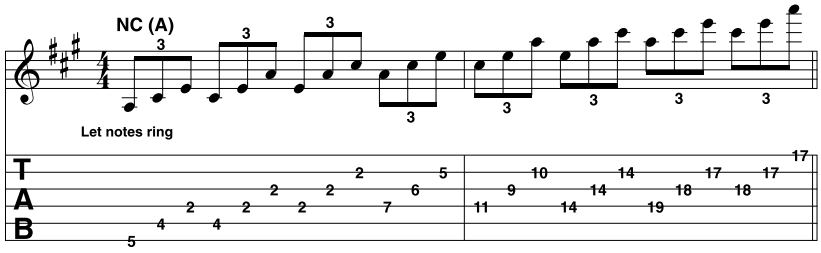
The pattern in Exercise 2 moved across the neck before moving up the neck; this exercise moves up the fretboard, then moves across the fretboard when we run out of frets. Since the second bar is all in the upper register of the fretboard where the frets are closest together, careful and accurate placement of the fretting hand fingers is required.



4 ACROSS AND THEN UP THE FRETBOARD

4/4 TIME

This exercise shows another way to play triads, and involves moving across the fretboard, as in Ex 2, then up the fretboard, as in Ex 3, upon reaching strings four, three and two. All these will hopefully show that there are numerous ways of combining triads that move across, as well as up and down the fretboard – the more you experiment, the greater your knowledge. Also, try playing Exercises 2, 3 and 4 in all the other keys. Good luck!



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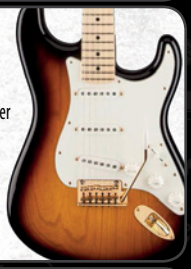

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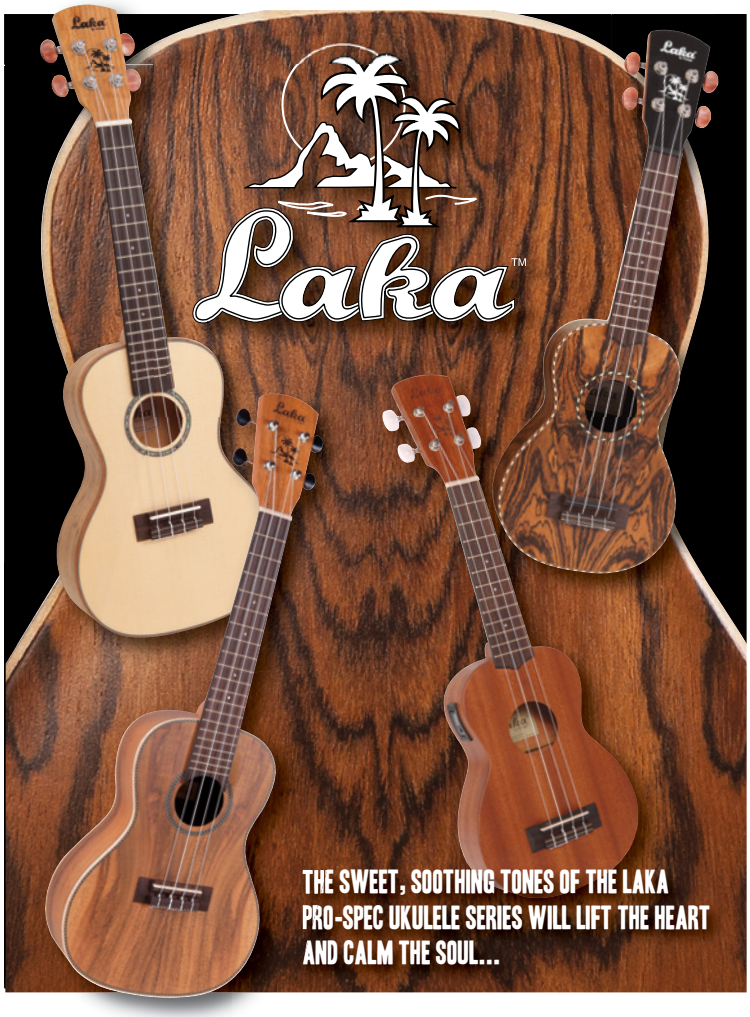

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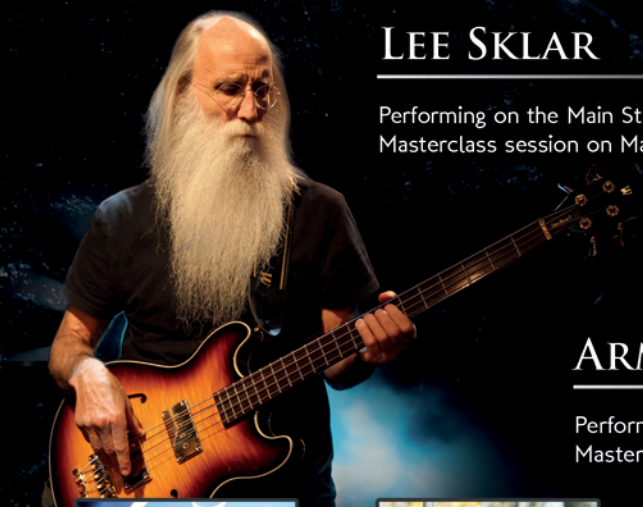

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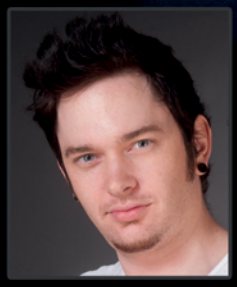

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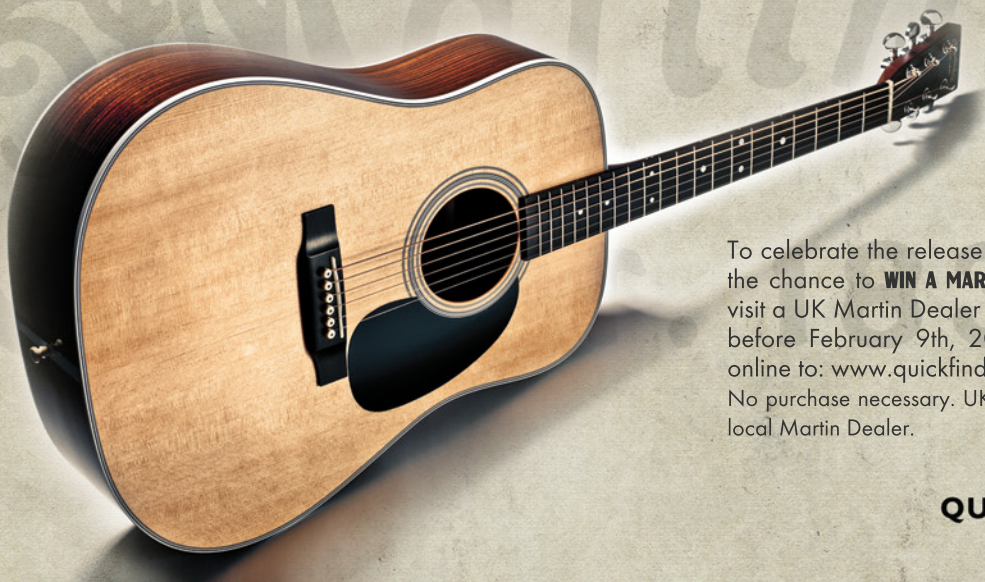

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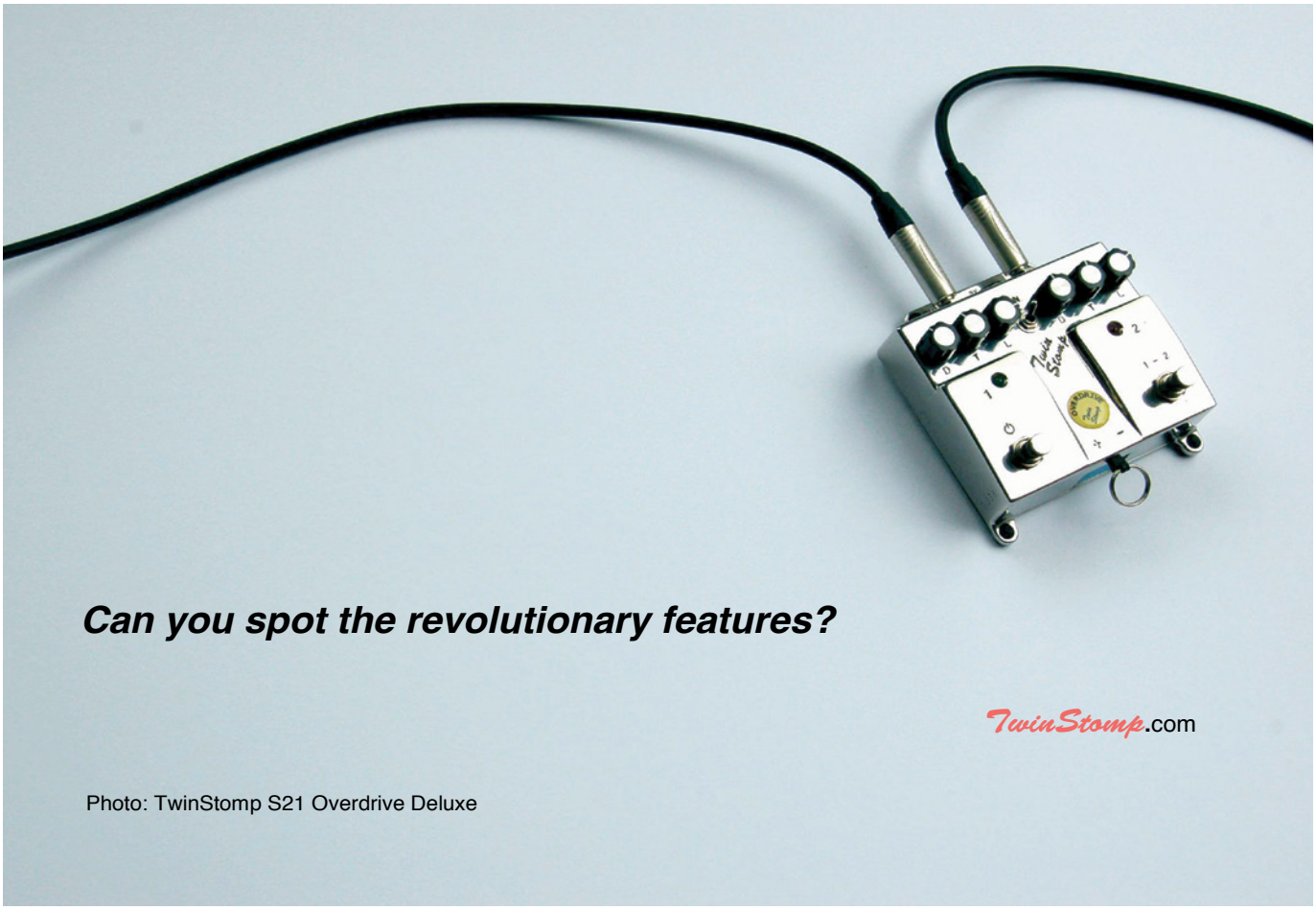

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Egnator Rebel 30 combo wanted and also Roland-ready Strat, Mexican, white, must be good working condition, preferably London. Tel: Mick 020 8530 1208

Vintage Paradise guitar wanted. Text or call Andy on 07944 651798 email delavigne@btinternet.com

Brown haired bassist wanted for hard rock band. Must have long hair and be over 22. Contact Gismus@aol.com

Yamaha SG200 guitar finished in pearl white. Tel/txt: 07710 161598 or email Chris-r1968@hotmail.co.uk

Fender Tweed '50s Champ or Princeton or Deluxe amp wanted, must be original. Tel: 0151 638 9567, Cheshire area

Gibson 2008 50th Anniversary Explorer DSX50 brimstone burst wanted, excellent to mint, with case. Also wanted: original hard case for Gibson Gothic Explorer. Tel: Tony 01535 606002 or email info@telluris.info

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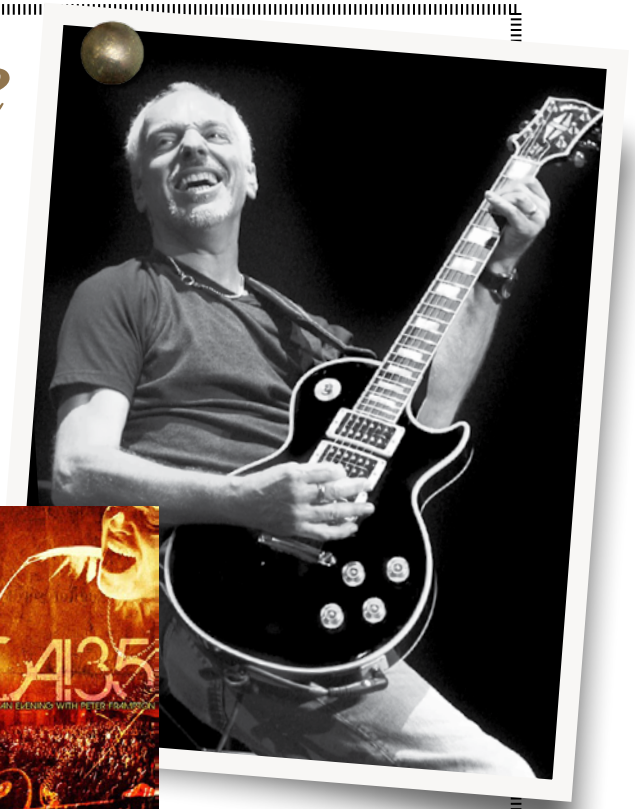
Soundtrack of my life

Peter Frampton

From classic British pop to heavy blues, Southern rock and a wide variety of jazz, the zillion-selling guitarist reveals his musical touchstones



In an early band alongside David Bowie and handpicked by Bill Wyman for his protégés the Preachers, Peter Frampton – even at 16 years old – looked set for great things. He took a sideways step to front pop-rockers the Herd in 1969, and after a sole hit single took up the lead guitar role with Steve Marriott's Humble Pie, making two fine albums. Solo success followed with four albums doing increasing business in the US, culminating in the double live LP *Frampton Comes Alive!* in 1976. It sold a staggering 10 million copies and had the honour of being the best-selling live album of all time until the record was finally toppled in 1998 by Garth Brooks. Famed for his use of the Talkbox, his three-pickup Les Paul Custom and for songs like *Show Me The Way, Do You Feel Like I Do* and *Baby I Love Your Way,* Frampton has carved a permanent place in rock history.

The Shadows

THE SHADOWS

I think it was 1962. I had bought every single 45 before that and I couldn't wait for that album to come out. They were sporting those wonderful

Fenders on the cover that we'd never seen in Britain at that time. I think all the potential guitarists bought this one. When the Shadows appeared we all just to have guitars.

The Beatles

SGT PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND

I was a sort of self-taught engineer right from the beginning. I'd met a bunch of engineers and learned a lot but when *Sgt Pepper* came out it was

like, okay, now I'm completely foxed. This is totally off the chart, it was the jawdropper. Multi-track recording changed everything, and the Beatles took it to the limit.

Django Reinhardt & Stephane Grappelli

THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION

The Shadows came into the house with our first Dansette record player and so did the Hot Club De France. Everything Django did was brilliant. He

and Hank Marvin have been there throughout my career, and I always go back and listen to both of them. Everyone is sort of compared to those two in a way for me.

Kenny Burrell

FORMS

He plays different styles on here, which is rather neat, but anything of him with Jimmy Smith is fantastic. I'm very motivated by people's guitar

sounds and his is very rich – I'm sure he was using flatwounds. It's just the fact that it wasn't just 9000 notes a minute, it was supremely melodic. I've always been a fan.

Cream

FRESH CREAM

There was a studio in London called Ryemuse – it was a tiny room and I was recording there with the Herd. We were in during the day and Cream would

come in after us to do *Fresh Cream*. I would move my 50W Marshall out and Eric would move his in. We'd get to hear what they had done the night before. It's a special memory.

Stevie Wonder

MUSIC OF MY MIND

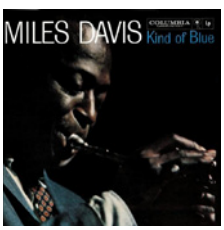
I think that *Music Of My Mind* was a very important album. It was the second one he played everything on, and it was also the first time I'd

heard the Talkbox on record. It was very inspiring – I'd heard that sound before live, but not done as well as this. That was it for me; I thought, I have to go and find one.

Miles Davis

KIND OF BLUE

There's no guitar on this next record but there's some incredible soloists. It's *the* jazz album: Jimmy Cobb on drums, Paul Chambers on bass

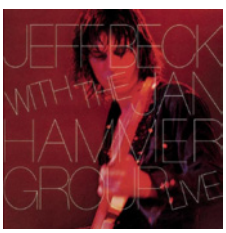


and course Coltrane. I'm always inspired by what they're playing – I've gone as far as to learn the sax solos on my guitar. It's one of those records that is completely timeless.

Jeff Beck and Jan Hammer

LIVE

This is a phenomenal live record. It's got *Freeway Jam, She's A Woman* – with Jeff using the Talkbox – and *Scatterbrain*. Jeff is incorporating all the

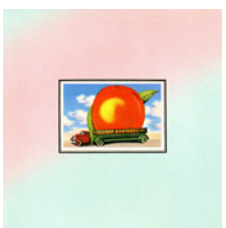


studio overdubs in one fell swoop! No one can really touch him. One of the best players alive today, I think, and he just keeps taking it further and further. There's no fear in him.

Allman Brothers

EAT A PEACH

First it was Duane, but then Dickie Betts was pretty phenomenal on this record and they're still doing great – the good ones keep going and seem to get



better. I've had the honour of being asked to sit in with the Allman Brothers twice now, and Warren Haynes is a dear friend. He's the hardest working man in the music industry!

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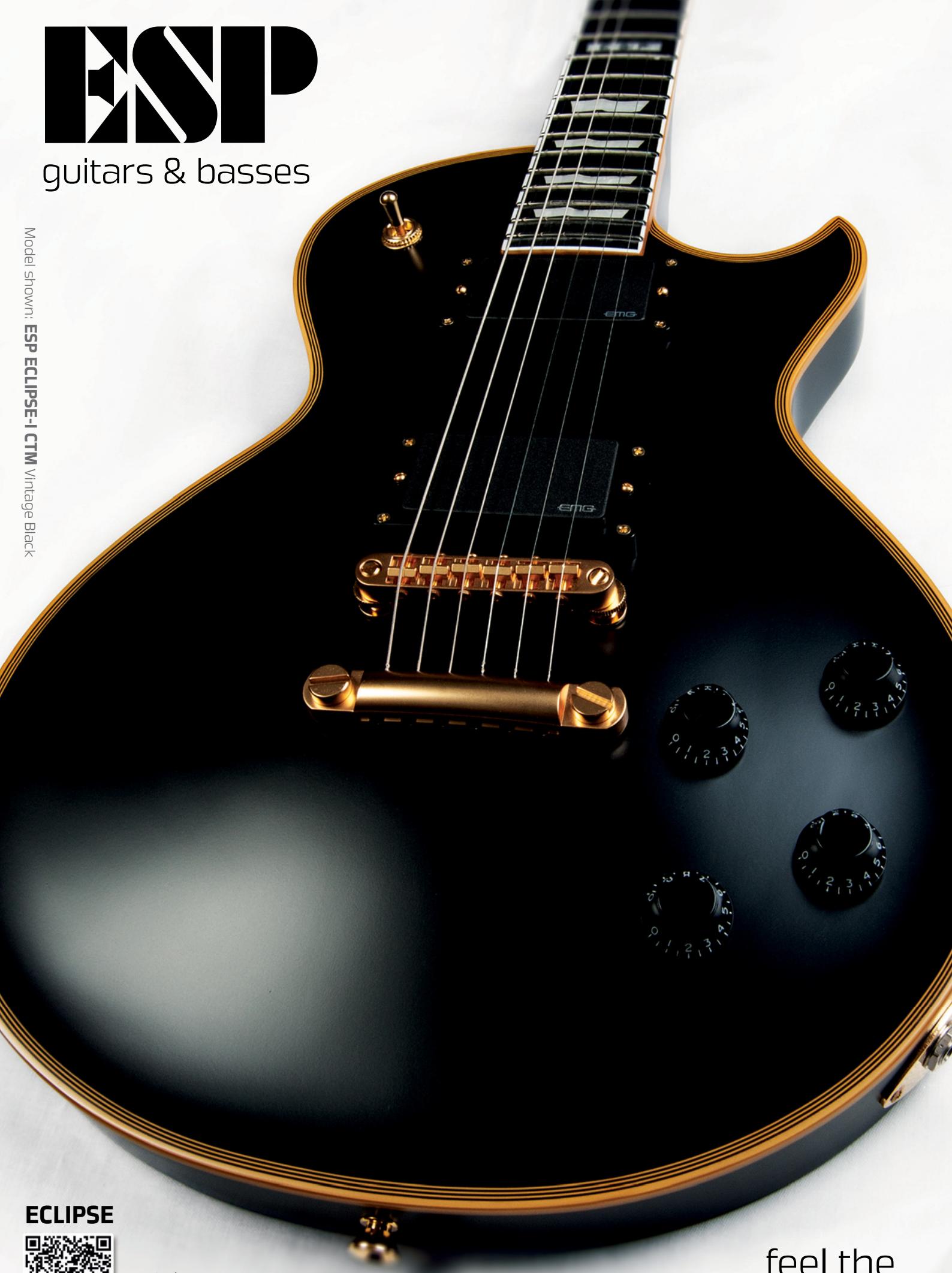

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